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THE LIFE

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

COMMANDER IN CHIEF

OF THE

AMERICAN FORCES

DURING THE WAR WHICH ESTABLISHED THE INDEPENDENCE OF HIS COUNTRY,

AND FIRST PRESIDENT

OF

THE UNITED STATES.

36653

COMPILED UNDER THE INSPECTION OF

THE HON. BUSHROD WASHINGTON,

From Original Papers bequeathed to him by his deceased Relative.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING A COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF THE COLONIES PLANTED BY THE ENGLISH ON THE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA.

BY JOHN MARSHALL,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES, &c. &c.

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LIFE

OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival of the British commissioners—Terms of conciliation proposed—Answer of Congress to these propositions—Attempts of Mr. Johnstone to bribe the principal members of Congress—Congress orders the publication of the private letters from Johnstone to the members of that body—Manifesto of the commissioners, and counter-manifesto by Congress—Arrival of Girard, minister plenipotentiary from the King of France—His reception by Congress—Hostilities of the Indians—Colonel J. Butler with a party of Indians breaks into the Wyoming settlement—His treachery to Colonel Zebulon Butler—Kingston besieged by the Indians; surrenders, and the garrison and inhabitants butchered—Wilksborough also surrenders, and meets the same fate—Distresses of the settlers in Wyoming—Colonel Alden surprised, and with some of his party killed—Colonel Clark surprises St. Vincent, and takes possession of it—Congress determines to attack Canada, and the other British possessions in North America—General

Washington urges reasons against the plan—has a personal interview with a committee of Congress, and induces that body to abandon the enterprise.

ABOUT the time that Commodore Parker sailed for the southern states, in the year 1778, the commissioners appointed to give effect to the late conciliatory acts of parliament, which had been proposed by Lord North, embarked for Europe. They had exerted unsuccessfully their utmost powers to effect the objects of their mission. The terms now offered were such as, at one time, America would most joyfully have accepted; but they required a union of the force of the two nations under one common sovereign. These were terms to which America was no longer disposed, or even at liberty to accede. All those affections which parts of the same empire should feel for each other had been eradicated by a distressing war; the great body of the nation was determined, at every sacrifice, to maintain its independence; and the treaty with France had pledged them, by every principle of honour and national faith, never to consent to a re-union with the British empire.

The British commissioners arrived in Philadelphia, while that place was yet in possession of their army, and are understood to have brought positive and secret orders for its immediate evacuation.

The reception which had been already given to the conciliatory bills, on which their mission was founded;

founded; a reception manifesting the fixed determination of Congress, previously to any knowledge of the treaty with France, must have left them but little hope, that the propositions they had brought with them could be accepted.* They were however, especially Governor Johnstone, persons who had always openly condemned the violent measures of administration, and had wished a settlement of differences on the ground first taken by America; and, of consequence, they were now sincerely desirous of bringing about a reconciliation between the two countries.

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* Subsequent to the copies of the bills which were sent over before their passing into laws, letters had been received from Lord Howe and Sir Henry Clinton, inclosing the acts themselves, to which Congress returned the following answer:

"MY LORD,

"I have had the honour to lay your Lordship's letter of May 27, with the acts of the British parliament inclosed, before Congress, and I am instructed to acquaint your Lordship, that they have already expressed their sentiments upon bills not essentially different from those acts, in a publication of the 22d of April last.

"Your Lordship may be assured, that when the King of Great Britain shall be seriously disposed to put an end to the unprovoked and cruel war waged against these United States, Congress will readily attend to such terms of peace as may consist with the honour of independent nations, the interest of their constituents, and the sacred regard they mean to pay to treaties. "I have the honour to be, &c."

"*To Admiral Lord Howe.*"

A similar letter was addressed to Sir Henry Clinton.

Their arrival, therefore, was immediately announced to General Washington, by Sir Henry Clinton, who was joined with them in the commission, and a passport was requested for their secretary, Doctor Ferguson, as the bearer of their first dispatches to Congress. This passport the commander in chief declined granting, until he should receive the instructions of his government; on which a letter addressed "to the President and other the members of Congress" was forwarded in the usual manner. With this letter, were transmitted copies of their commission, and of the acts of parliament on which it was founded. It contained also propositions for the following, among other purposes:

"To consent to a cessation of hostilities both by sea and land.

"To restore free intercourse, to revive mutual affection, and renew the common benefits of naturalization, through the several parts of the empire.

"To extend every freedom to trade that the respective interest of Britain and America could require.

"To agree that no military force should be kept up in North America, without the consent of the General Congress, or particular assemblies.

"To concur in measures calculated to discharge the debts of America, and to raise the credit and value of the paper circulation.

"To

"To perpetuate the union by a reciprocal deputation of an agent or agents, who shall have the privilege of a seat and voice in the parliament of Great Britain, or, if sent from Britain, to have a seat and voice in the assemblies of the different colonies, to which they may be deputed respectively, in order to attend the several interests of those by whom they may be deputed.

"In short, to establish the power of the respective legislatures in each particular colony; to settle its revenue in civil and military establishment, and to exercise a perfect freedom in legislation and internal government, so that the British colonies throughout North America, acting with Great Britain, in peace and in war, under one common sovereign, may have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege, short of a total separation of interests, or consistent with that union of force, on which the safety of their common religion and liberty depends."

On reading the letter containing these propositions, some observations were found to be mingled with them, reflecting on the conduct of France.* The reading was interrupted, and a motion made to proceed no further, in consequence of this offen-

* The words were "insidious interposition of a power, which has from the first settlement of the colonies been actuated with enmity to us both; and notwithstanding the pretended date, or present form of the French offers."

sive

sive language against his Most Christian Majesty. This motion producing some debate, an adjournment was called for and carried. When Congress re-assembled, the warmth of the preceding day had not entirely subsided; but after several ineffectual motions the letter was read, and a committee appointed for that purpose reported an answer, which being unanimously agreed to, was signed by the president, and transmitted to the commissioners. This letter declared that "nothing but an earnest desire to spare the further effusion of human blood could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions so disrespectful to his Most Christian Majesty, the good and great ally of these states, or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honour of an independent nation.

"That the acts of the British parliament, the commission from their sovereign, and their letter, supposed the people of the United States to be subjects of the crown of Great Britain, and were founded on the idea of dependence, which is utterly inadmissible.

"That Congress was inclined to peace, notwithstanding the unjust claims from which this war originated, and the savage manner in which it had been conducted. They would therefore be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the King of Great Britain

Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose. The only solid proof of this disposition would be an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of these states, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies."

Some apprehensions seem to have been entertained that these propositions might make an unfavourable impression on the public mind, and increase the divisions which already existed. They were therefore attacked with much wit and asperity by individuals, who, at the same time, combated them with great force of argument.

In the packet addressed to Congress were several private letters, written by Governor Johnstone to particular members of that body, in which he blended with the most flattering expressions of their characters and their conduct, assurances of the honours and emoluments to which those would be entitled who should contribute to restore peace and harmony to the two countries, and to terminate the present calamitous war.*

* In addition to these letters, direct propositions, after the evacuation of Philadelphia, were made to Mr. Read, a member of Congress for the state of Pennsylvania, by a lady connected with the British army, who assured him as from Governor Johnstone, that ten thousand pounds sterling, and the best office within the gift of the crown in America, might be at his disposal, if he could bring about a re-union between the two countries. Mr. Read replied, that he was not worth purchasing, but such as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it.

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The removal from Philadelphia followed the reception of the answer of Congress to the propositions of the British commissioners too immediately for any further measures to be taken by them, until they had reached New York. From that city a second letter was addressed (July 13) to the president and members of Congress, in which they express their regrets, that, on the part of Congress, any difficulties were raised, which must prolong the calamities of the present war. With respect to the two alternatives stated as preliminaries necessary even to the beginning of a negotiation for peace, they declared their opinion to be, "that the independence of the people of America on Great Britain, except so far as is necessary to preserve that union of force in which the safety and advantage of both consisted, was fully acknowledged in their first letter; and that they were willing to enter into a fair discussion of all the circumstances which might be necessary to ensure, or even to enlarge that independency."

They excuse their not beginning with the other part of the alternative, the withdrawal of the fleets and armies, "on account of the precautions rendered necessary against their ancient enemies, and a regard to the safety of many, who, from affection to Great Britain, have exposed themselves to suffer in this contest, and to whom Great Britain owes support at every expence of blood and treasure. This measure, however," it was intimated, "might very

very soon follow the first advances to peace on the part of the United States, which should indicate a favourable prospect of a reconciliation with their fellow-citizens of this continent, and those in Great Britain."

The most explicit assurances were added, "that no circumstances would give the commissioners more satisfaction than to find that the extent of the future connection between the two countries would be determined on principles of mere reason, and considerations of mutual interest, on which they were likewise willing to risk the permanence of any arrangements that might be formed."

To that part of the letter from Congress which refers to treaties already subsisting, they say, "that if such treaties are to affect their deliberations, they ought to be communicated both for their consideration and that of the constituents of Congress, who would judge whether any alliance they might have contracted would furnish sufficient reasons for continuing this unnatural war."

Some doubt was expressed concerning the power of Congress to contract foreign alliances, as the confederation was not yet in force, and the letter concluded by saying, "We will not suppose that any objection can arise on your part to our communicating to the public our own proceedings; the respect which we pay to the great body of the people you are supposed to represent, shall be evidenced by us in every possible mark of consideration and regard." It

It would seem that the previous conduct of Congress must have satisfied the British commissioners, that all hope of restoring peace on any other terms than the complete independence of the United States, must, at least, be suspended, if not entirely abandoned. Their present endeavours, therefore, were most probably used, not for Congress, but for the people at large. They persuaded themselves that the attachment towards Britain, and prejudices against France, which had once subsisted, could not have been entirely eradicated; and that a plain demonstration that the original ground of contest was yielded by England would detach such numbers from the supporters of the war, as would render unavoidable an accommodation on the terms proposed. It had therefore now become a game of skill, in which the affections and passions of the people were played for, and was no longer a mere diplomatic correspondence, treating on the interests of two great nations, with the hope of accommodation between the negotiators.

The first decisive rejection of the terms held forth in the conciliatory bills, had been made at a time when the existence of the treaties with France was neither known nor suspected. Congress had refused to listen to the propositions of the commissioners, when no certainty existed of the commencement of war between France and England; and when, the eventual treaty of alliance not having taken

taken effect, they were at perfect liberty to negotiate a separate peace. Intelligence was now received of the arrival of a French fleet with a minister, and the utmost confidence prevailed that an European war was inevitable. There was therefore no probability that propositions which had been rejected under circumstances much less favourable to the establishment of American independence, could be accepted when the prospects of the United States wore a brighter aspect than they had ever before assumed. The present and subsequent proceedings, therefore, were designed to act on the public mind; and certainly the moderation breathed in the letter of the 13th of July was well calculated to rekindle any latent spark of attachment which might yet linger in the bosoms of those who had once prided themselves in the character of British subjects, and to incline to peace, on the terms offered, the great mass, who were believed to have given sufficient indications of being wearied with the sufferings and calamities of war.

The letter recited above having been read, Congress resolved that, as neither the independence of the United States was explicitly acknowledged, nor the fleets and armies withdrawn, no answer should be given to it.

A few days before the receipt of the letter of the

the 13th of July, a resolution of Congress required that all letters of a public nature received by any member from any subject of the British crown should be laid before them. In consequence of this resolution, the letters of Governor Johnstone were adduced, and some time afterwards Mr. Read stated in his place a direct offer which had been made him by a third person, of a considerable sum of money, and of any office in the gift of the crown, as an inducement to use his influence for the restoration of harmony between the two countries. These circumstances it was determined to communicate to the people at large, and therefore a publication of the letters was immediately ordered. Some time afterwards Congress made a solemn declaration, in which, after reciting the paragraphs of the private letters which were offensive, and the conversation stated by Mr. Read, they expressed their opinion, "that these were direct attempts to corrupt and bribe the Congress of the United States, and that it was incompatible with their honour to hold any manner of correspondence or intercourse with the said George Johnstone, esquire, especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty is interested." An attempt to involve the other commissioners in the same exclusion was unsuccessful, and this declaration was transmitted to them, while they expected

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an answer to a remonstrance on the detention of the troops captured with General Burgoyne.

On receiving this paper, Mr. Johnstone withdrew from the commission; and in the declaration containing his determination to act no further in that character, which was transmitted to Congress, he said, "he should be happy to find the Congress, when this exception as to him should be removed, inclined to retract their former declaration, and negotiate with others on terms equally conducive to the happiness of both countries." This declaration on the part of Mr. Johnstone was accompanied by one signed by the other commissioners, in which, without admitting the construction put by Congress on his letters, or the authority of the person who held the conversation with Mr. Read, they denied all knowledge of these letters, or of that conversation. They at the same time represented the advantages to result to America from the propositions they had made, "advantages decidedly superior," they say, "to any which could be expected from an unnatural alliance with France, only entered into by that nation for the purpose of prolonging the war, after the full knowledge on their part of the liberal terms intended to be offered by Great Britain." With this declaration was transmitted a copy of the former remonstrance respecting the convention troops, without the signature of Governor Johnstone, and an extract from

from the instructions* given by the secretary of state to Sir Henry Clinton, authorizing him in express terms to demand a performance of the convention made with General Burgoyne, and, if required, to renew and ratify, in the king's name, all the conditions stipulated in it. All the publications of the British commissioners seem to manifest an opinion that they could be more successful with the people at large than with Congress, and therefore they not unfrequently betray the desire that the constituents of that body might be enabled to decide on the measures taken by their representatives.

On the part of Congress, it was deemed of the last importance to keep the public mind correct, and to defeat the impressions sought to be made on it. Several members of that body entered the lists as disputants, and employed their pens with great ability and success, as well in serious argument, as calling to their aid all the various passions which on such occasions influence the conduct of men. Much use was made of the attempt to effect the object of the mission by corruption; and it was urged with great force, that should America now break her faith with France by treating on

* Some expressions having been used in the letter respecting the convention troops, which were deemed disrespectful, no other reply was made than "Congress gave no answer to insolent letters."

the

the footing of dependence, she would forfeit all credit with foreign nations, would be considered by all as faithless and infamous, and would lose the possibility of future foreign aid; after which, the terms now conceded might be retracted, and the war recommenced. To these representations were added the certainty of soon succeeding in establishing completely their independence, and the great advantages to result from such a situation. The letters from the commissioners were treated as mere attempts to sow divisions among the people, of which they might afterwards avail themselves, and thus effect by intrigue what had been found unattainable by arms.

These papers were read every where with avidity, and seem to have produced among the friends of the revolution, the full effect expected from them.

The commissioners appear still to have cherished the hope that a complete knowledge of the terms they had offered, and of all their transactions with Congress, operating on the total disappointment of the high expectations which had been formed of the decisive advantages to be derived from the fleet of D'Estaing, would make a great impression on a large portion of the American people. Before their departure they published a manifesto, addressed not only to the members of Congress, but to all the provincial assemblies, and all the inhabi-

tants

tants of the colonies of whatever denomination, in which they briefly recapitulated the different steps taken by them to accomplish the object of the commission, and the refusal of Congress even to open a conference with them. They again set forth the extent and beneficial tendency of the terms they were empowered to offer. Notwithstanding the obstructions they had met with, they declared their readiness still to proceed in the execution of the powers contained in their commission, and to treat not only with deputies from all the colonies conjointly, but with any provincial assembly or convention individually, at any time within the space of forty days from the date of their manifesto. Then addressing themselves to persons of every description, whether in civil, military, or ecclesiastical capacities, or in private stations, and suggesting severally to the consideration of each of these classes, such motives as might be supposed to have the greatest influence, adjured them all not to let pass so favourable an opportunity of securing their liberties, and their future prosperity and happiness, upon a permanent foundation. They also proclaimed a general pardon for all treasons and rebellious practices committed at any time previous to the date of their manifesto, to such as should, within the term of forty days, withdraw from their opposition to the British government, and conduct themselves in future as faithful and loyal subjects;

subjects; denouncing at the same time the utmost vengeance of the British nation against such as, after these benevolent offers, should obstinately persist in withholding their allegiance from their lawful sovereign. That all persons might be enabled to avail themselves of the pardon proclaimed by the manifesto, thirteen copies of it were immediately executed under the hands and seals of the commissioners, one of which was transmitted by a flag of truce to each state. A vast number of copies were printed, and endeavours were used, by means of flags and otherwise, to disperse them as extensively as possible among the people.

On being informed of this intention, Congress, without hesitation, embraced the part which the government of an independent nation must ever feel itself bound to pursue, when attempts are made to open negociations with other than the constituted authorities. They declared the practice, "to be contrary to the laws of nations, and utterly subversive of the confidence necessary for those means which had been invented among civilized nations to alleviate the horrors of war; and therefore, that the agents employed to distribute such papers were not entitled to the protection of a flag." They recommended it to the executive authorities in the respective states "to secure in close custody every person who, under

the sanction of a flag or otherwise, was found employed in circulating those manifestoes." At the same time, to shew that these measures were not taken for the purpose of concealing their conduct from their constituents, they themselves directed a publication of the manifesto in the American papers. Care, however, was taken that it should be accompanied by comments made by individuals, calculated to destroy its effect. A vessel containing a cargo of these papers being wrecked on the coast, the officer and crew having them in charge were made prisoners; and the requisition of Admiral Gambier for their release, in consequence of the privilege afforded by his flag, was answered by a declaration that they had forfeited that privilege by being charged with seditious papers.

Not long after the publication of the manifesto of the British commissioners, (October 30,) a counter-manifesto was issued by Congress, in which, after touching on subjects which might influence the public mind, they "solemnly declare and proclaim, that if their enemies presume to execute their threats, or persist in their present course of barbarity, they will take such exemplary vengeance as shall deter others from a like conduct. They appeal to that God who searcheth the hearts of men, for the rectitude of their intentions; and in his holy presence declare, that, as they are not moved

moved by any light and hasty suggestions of anger or revenge, so through every change of fortune they will adhere to this their determination."

Thus ended the fruitless attempt to restore a connection which had been wantonly broken, the reinstatement of which a variety of causes had rendered impracticable. With the war, and with their independence, a course of opinions had prevailed in America, which not only rendered a reunion between the two countries, under one common sovereign, extremely difficult, but, by substituting discordant materials in the place of the cement which had formerly bound them together, rendered such an event undesirable even to the British themselves. The time had now come when the true interest of that nation required the relinquishment of an expensive war, the object of which was unattainable, and which, if attained, must be preserved with great difficulty; and the establishment of those amicable relations which reciprocal interests produce between independent states, capable, by a fair and equal interchange of good offices, of being serviceable to each other.

This opinion, however, was not yet embraced by the cabinet of London, and great exertions were yet to be made for the re-annexation of North America to the British empire. Even the opposition was not united against a continuance of the war on the present ground; and the Earl

of Chatham, who had endeavoured, first to prevent the contest, and afterwards to produce conciliation, closed a life, of which the splendour was unrivaled among characters merely political, in unavailing efforts to prevent that dismemberment which had now become inevitable.

In the midst of these transactions with the commissioners from Great Britain, the Sieur Girard, who had negotiated on the part of his sovereign the treaties between France and the United States, arrived at Philadelphia, July 14th, in the character of minister plenipotentiary of his most Christian Majesty.

The joy produced by this event was unbounded. On the first notice of his being in the Delaware, on his passage to the residence of Congress, a committee was appointed to wait on him, and orders were given to prepare a house for his reception. He was soon afterwards admitted to an audience in the Congress-hall, to which he was conducted from his own house, by a committee appointed for that purpose. He was received with open doors; and, to render the solemnity more impressive, the vice-president and members of the supreme executive council of Pennsylvania, and the members of their legislature, were invited to be present at it. In addition, each member of Congress was furnished with two tickets of admittance, for such other persons as he should chuse to introduce.

troduce. A semi-circle was formed by the members within the bar of the house, at one extremity of which sat the president, and at the other the minister of France. After the forms prescribed had been passed through, the committee again attended on him to his house; and, in the afternoon, a very elegant entertainment was given him by Congress, to which the public characters in Philadelphia, and several strangers of distinction, were invited.

The reception of a minister from the most powerful prince in Europe, being among the first and most important insignia of independence, was alike new and gratifying to the United States.

While these diplomatic concerns employed the American cabinet, and while the war seemed to languish on the Atlantic, it raged to the west in its most savage form.

A considerable degree of solicitude had ever been felt by Congress, to engage the numerous tribes of Indians on the frontier, either to take part with them in the war, or to preserve a neutrality. In its first stages, many of them manifested a disposition not unfriendly to the United States; but the inability of the American government to furnish them with such European articles as they are in the habit of using, contrasted with the presents they received from Montreal, and the ports on the lakes, soon decided them in favour of the

the enemy. Early in 1778, there were many indications of a general disposition to make war on the United States; and the frontiers, from the Mohawk to the Ohio, were threatened with the tomahawk and the scalping-knife. Every representation from that country concurred in establishing the opinion, that a war with the Indians should never be defensive; and that to obtain peace, it must be carried into their own country. It was also believed to be proved, that the hostility already experienced had been very much excited by Colonel Hamilton, the governor of Detroit, which place was understood to be left in a very defenceless condition. Against Detroit, therefore, an expedition was, on the 11th of June, resolved on by Congress. General M'Intosh, who had been appointed by General Washington to succeed General Hand,* commanded at Pittsburg. He was directed to prepare for carrying on the expedition with three thousand men; of whom Virginia was desired to furnish from her militia such number, not exceeding two thousand five hundred, as the board of war, or General M'Intosh, should require. To facilitate the success of this

* He had been recalled at his own request, because the disputes between Virginia and Pennsylvania, respecting territory, rendered it necessary that some more impartial person than a citizen of either state should command at that station.

enterprise,

enterprise, and the sooner to reduce the hostile tribes to submission, another was resolved on from the Mohawk river, into the country of the Senecas. Major-general Gates, or the officer commanding on the east of the Hudson, was desired to take measures to carry this resolution into execution; and the commissioners for Indian affairs at Albany were directed to co-operate with him.

Unfortunately, the acts of the government did not correspond with the vigour of its resolutions. Expeditions to be carried on principally by militia, through the agency of distinct governments, can seldom receive that promptitude and energy in their execution, which will ensure them success. The necessary preparations were not made, and the inhabitants of the frontiers remained insufficiently protected, till the plans against them were matured, and the storm which had been long gathering burst upon them with a fury which spread desolation wherever it reached.

The scene of greatest misery and suffering was Wyoming. This is a tract of country lying on both sides of the Susquehannah, which was claimed by Connecticut and Pennsylvania; and was settled by emigrants from the former of those states, who were said to have purchased the land from the Indian proprietors. This settlement, which had flourished in a remarkable degree, contained upwards of a thousand families; and had furnished,

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it is said, nearly that number of soldiers to the continental army, besides garrisons for the forts they had erected in their country for their own security. Unfortunately, they had not been exempted from those political divisions, which, carried to an excess, poison the source of all human felicity, destroy those sweet affections which attach members of the same family to each other, and plant the most deadly hate where nature or early habits had sown the seeds of harmony and love.

While the great body of the settlement joined their countrymen in the existing contest, and manifested a degree of zeal equal to that which was displayed in any other part of the union, some few adhered to the royal cause. Encouraged by their distance from the military force of the nation, and stimulated perhaps by their neighbours in Canada, they did not conceal their motives or their objects; and having experienced what they deemed severity, many of them were induced at an early period of the war to take refuge among the neighbouring Indians, or at the posts occupied by the British. Their numbers gradually increased, and their resentments sustained no diminution. At their head was a Colonel John Butler, the cousin of Colonel Zebulon Butler, the gentleman who was first in command in the militia of Wyoming.

The commencement of the year had furnished numerous indications of hostile designs on the part of

of the Indians; but, as the time approached when the great blow they meditated was to be given, the cunning policy of increasing its effect by lulling into security those against whom it was to be directed, was successfully resorted to. Several messengers came in from the hostile tribes, charged with assurances of their peaceful dispositions; and Butler himelf, in a numerous assemblage of savages, declared in their peculiar language, that he was about to withdraw to Detroit, "*his hand being too short* to do any thing this year." Their designs however were penetrated; and it is said that letters were dispatched to Congress, and to the General, stating the dangers which threatened that frontier. These letters were unfortunately intercepted by the tories of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the inhabitants, for their security, took refuge in their forts.

On the first of July, a body supposed to be nearly sixteen hundred strong, composed of about three hundred Indians led by their own chiefs, and a number of tories painted like Indians under the command of Colonel John Butler, broke into the Wyoming settlement, and obtained easy possession of one of the two upper forts; which being garrisoned, as is alleged, chiefly by concealed tories, was delivered up without opposition. The other was taken.

The two principal forts, Kingston and Wilkesborough,

borough, were near each other, on opposite sides of the river. Colonel Zebulon Butler marched into Kingston with the greatest part of the armed force of the country, and a number of women and children took refuge in the same place. After rejecting a summons to surrender, he proposed a parley, and a place at some distance from the fort was agreed on for a meeting of the chiefs. He marched out with four hundred men to the place appointed, where no person was found on the part of the enemy; but at a still greater distance from the fort, at the foot of a mountain, a flag was exhibited, which retired as he approached, as if apprehensive of danger from the Americans. Colonel Butler continued to advance till he found himself almost enveloped by the enemy, who rose and fired on him. Notwithstanding the effect to be expected from such circumstances, his troops displayed such a degree of firmness, and acquitted themselves with so much resolution, that the advantage was rather on their side; when a soldier, either through treachery or cowardice, cried out, "The Colonel has ordered a retreat." Immediate confusion was succeeded by a total rout. The troops fled towards the river, which they endeavoured to pass, in order to enter Fort Wilkesborough. The enemy pursued "with the fury of devils;" and of the four hundred who had marched out on this unfortunate parley, only about twenty escaped.

caped. Fort Kingston was immediately invested; and, to increase the terror of the garrison, and impress on them the horrors of their situation, the green and bleeding scalps of their murdered countrymen were sent in for their inspection.

Colonel Zebulon Butler having withdrawn himself and his family down the river, Colonel Dennison, the commanding officer, went out with a flag to enquire of the officer commanding the besiegers, what terms would be allowed the garrison, on surrendering the fort? Uniting to Spartan brevity more than cannibal ferocity, this tutored savage answered in two words—"The hatchet."*

Having lost great part of his garrison, being unable to hold out longer, and not supposing it possible that the unresisting could be coolly and deliberately massacred, Colonel Dennison surrendered at discretion. He misunderstood the character of those into whose hands he had fallen. The threat of Butler was executed with scrupulous punctuality. After selecting a few prisoners, the great body of the people in the fort were inclosed in the houses, fire was applied to them, and they were consumed together.†

Butler then passed over to Wilkesborough, which was surrendered without resistance. This effort to mollify the revengeful fury which go-

* Gordon. Ramsay. † Ibid.

verned

verned him was unavailing. The continental soldiers, amounting to about seventy, were hacked to pieces. The remaining men, with the women and children, shared the fate of their brethren in Kingston. They perished in the flames.

All show of resistance was now terminated; but the ruin contemplated was not yet complete. Near three thousand persons had escaped. Flying without money, clothes, or food, they sought for safety in the interior country. To prevent their returning, every thing remaining behind them was doomed to destruction. Fire and the sword were alternately applied; and all the houses and improvements which the labour of years had provided, as well as every living animal which could be found, were destroyed. The settlements of the tories alone were preserved. "They appeared," says Mr. Gordon, "as islands in the midst of surrounding ruin."

Some peculiar instances of barbarity have been related, in the details given of this expedition, at which human nature recoils. Parents were murdered by their children, and brothers and sisters fell by the hands of brothers. Of such crimes are we capable, when the torch of civil discord is once lighted among us, and all the endearing social ties which sweeten life are made to yield to political fury!

The incursions of irregulars may be often repeated,

peated, but are seldom of long duration. The invaders of Wyoming withdrew from the country they had laid waste, before the arrival of the continental troops which were detached to meet them.

To cover every part of the United States from the ravages of their enemies, would have required forces infinitely more numerous than they could raise. Different districts were therefore unavoidably exposed to all the calamities ever to be experienced by those into the bosom of whose country war is carried. Fatigued and worn out by perpetual calls into the field, the militia every where required to be relieved and protected by continental troops. Their applications were necessarily resisted, and the regular regiments distributed in such manner as, on a general view of the situation of the whole, would best promote the great object of the contest. The sufferings of the western frontier, however, were now such, and the danger which threatened it was so imminent, that it became necessary to spare for its defence a more considerable portion of the army, than had been allotted to that part of the union, since the capture of Burgoyne. On July the 15th Colonel Hartley's regiment, and two companies of militia, were ordered, on the first intelligence of the destruction of Wyoming, to repair thither, and afford all the protection in their power to the country generally. The Colonel set out on an expedition

dition against the Indian towns, some of which he destroyed, and made some prisoners; but on hearing that they were collecting in very great force, he thought it advisable to retreat. His rear was attacked with spirit; but his troops behaved so well, that the assailants were repulsed with loss. The 4th Pennsylvania regiment, raised in the western frontier of that state, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel William Butler, a partizan of great merit, and the remnant of Morgan's rifle corps, led by Major Posey, were also detached to the immediate assistance of the distressed people; and took a position at Schoharie, a small village on a river of that name, which runs into the Mohawk. With his continental troops, assisted by about thirty rangers, Colonel Butler entered the enemy's country, and, after a march attended with infinite labour and difficulty in crossing high mountains and deep waters, penetrated as far as their towns at Unundilla and Anaquaqua,* which, with a considerable quantity of corn laid up for their winter's supply, he entirely destroyed. Having effected this service, he returned to Schoharie, without having been able to fall in with any party of the enemy.

* The head-quarters of the celebrated Colonel Brendt, an Indian chief of the half breed, distinguished for his courage and cruelty.

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The expedition of Lieutenant-colonel Butler had rendered some service to the western inhabitants. Though the numbers of the enemy had not been diminished, they had been compelled, by the loss of their towns and provisions, to withdraw to a greater distance from the frontiers, and, of consequence, their future incursions would be rendered more difficult. Pending these transactions, Congress received a letter from Colonel Hartley, giving an account of his expedition, and informing them that the enemy were fortifying at Chemung, a large settlement about twelve miles from the mouth of the Cayuga, a river emptying itself into the Susquehanna; at which place a large body of tories was collected. Chemung and Niagara were represented to be the principal places of rendezvous for the tories who could not reach the city of New York. A resolution was immediately passed, directing General Washington to take measures for preventing the enemy from occupying a post at Chemung, and for repelling the invasions of the savages on the frontiers of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

The season of the year had now come on when the frequent rains swell the waters of that country so as to render them impassable; in addition to which, it was impossible, unless the roads should be opened, to transport artillery, without which any attempt on the fortifications must be unsuccessful.

cessful. These difficulties, which had escaped the attention of Congress, were adverted to by the commander in chief. He however took immediate measures for executing the resolution, should it be practicable, and for that purpose put Clinton's brigade in motion. Apprehensive, however, that the season of the year must necessarily defeat the expedition, a council of general officers was called at Albany, consisting of Generals Schuyler, Hand, and Clinton, at which Governor Clinton also assisted, who unanimously declared against it. Their opinion was transmitted to Congress, and the expedition laid aside for the present campaign.

Before the expedition against Chemung was relinquished, a body of about five hundred men, composed of Indians, tories, and a few regulars, broke into the Cherry-valley settlement, where Colonel Alden was posted with a continental regiment. A serjeant with a small patrole was cut off, in consequence of which the colonel was completely surprised. In attempting to gain the fort he was killed with ten of his soldiers, and the lieutenant-colonel and two subaltern officers were made prisoners. The fort was then assaulted; but a resolute defence being made, and it being understood that assistance was approaching, the enterprise was abandoned; and his party, after having repeated the horrors practised in Wyoming, retired out of the settlement.

While

While the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania were thus suffering the calamities incident to savage warfare, a fate equally severe seems to have been destined for Virginia. The western militia of that state had made some successful incursions into the country north-west of the Ohio, and had taken some British posts on the Mississippi. These, by an act of the legislature, were erected into a county, called the county of the Illinois; and a regiment of infantry, with a troop of cavalry, to be commanded by Colonel George Rogers Clarke, a gentleman whose great courage, uncommon hardihood, and capacity for Indian warfare, had given him repeated success in enterprises against the savages, were ordered to be recruited for its protection.

This corps was divided into several detachments, the principal of which remained with Colone Clarke at Kaskaskias. Colonel Hamilton, the governor of Detroit, who was understood to have been extremely active in fomenting Indian hostility, was at St. Vincent's, with about six hundred men, principally Indians, projecting an expedition, first against the post at Kaskaskias, and then up the Ohio to Pittsburgh; after which he proposed to desolate the frontiers of Virginia; when Clarke anticipated and defeated his design by one of those bold and decisive measures which, whether formed on a great or a small scale, with many thousand,

or a few hundred troops, mark the military and enterprising genius of the man who plans and executes them.

Clarke was too far removed from the inhabited country to hope for support, and was too weak to expect to maintain Kaskaskias and the Illinois against the regular force, aided by the whole body of Indians from the lakes to the mouth of the Ohio, by whom he was to be attacked at the first commencement of the season for action; yet he made every preparation in his power for defence. While thus employed, he received unquestionable information from a Spanish merchant, that Hamilton, who supposed himself to be in a state of perfect security at St. Vincent's, had detached his Indians to block up the Ohio, and to harass the frontiers; reserving at the post he occupied only about eighty regular troops, with three pieces of cannon, and some swivels mounted. Clarke at once resolved to seize this favourable moment for preserving himself from the impending danger. He detached a small galley which he had fitted out, mounting two four-pounders and four swivels, manned with a company of soldiers, and having on board stores for his troops, with orders to force her way up the Wabash, and take her station a few miles below St. Vincent, permitting nothing whatever to pass her. Having made this arrangement, he set out in the depth of winter with one hundred

hundred and thirty men, the whole force he could collect, to march across the country from Kaskaskias to St. Vincent's. On this march through the woods, and over high waters, sixteen days were employed. They were five days crossing the drowned lands of the Wabash, in the neighbourhood of the fort; and were under the necessity of wading about five miles in water, frequently up to the breast. After subduing these difficulties, which had been supposed insurmountable, this little party appeared before the town, which was completely surprised, and readily consented to change its master. Hamilton defended the fort for a short time, and then surrendered himself and his garrison prisoners of war. With a few of his immediate agents and counsellors, who had been instrumental in the savage barbarities he had encouraged, he was by order of the executive of Virginia put in irons and confined in a jail.

This small expedition was very important in its consequences. It entirely broke the plan which threatened to pour destruction, the ensuing campaign, on the whole country west of the Alleghany mountains; it detached from the British interest very many of those numerous tribes of Indians south of the waters immediately communicating with the great lakes; and had, most probably, a material influence in fixing the western boundary of the United States.

We have already seen that Congress, actuated by their wishes, rather than governed by a temperate calculation of the means in their possession, had, in the preceding winter, without consulting the commander in chief, planned a second invasion of Canada, to be conducted by the Marquis de la Fayette, and that, as the generals only were got in readiness for this expedition, it was necessarily laid aside. The design however seems to have been suspended, not totally abandoned. The alliance with France, by rendering success rather more possible, revived the latent wish to annex that extensive territory to the United States. Ambition, though an essential motive, was by no means the single one which persuaded the government to this enterprise. By obtaining possession of Canada, not only the dominions of the United States would be greatly extended, and other considerable advantages secured, but the cause of a perpetual and terrible savage war would be entirely removed, and a lasting peace to their northern and western frontiers completely secured. The conquest of Canada, therefore, was an object at all times contemplated with extreme solicitude.

After the war had commenced between France and Great Britain, that favourite subject was again taken up in Congress; and, towards autumn, a plan was completely digested for a combined attack to be made by the allied forces of France and the

the United States on all the British dominions on the continent, and on the adjacent islands of Cape Breton and Newfoundland. This plan was matured about the time the Marquis de la Fayette obtained leave to return to his own country; and was ordered to be transmitted by that nobleman to Doctor Franklin, the minister of the United States at the Court of Versailles, with instructions to induce, if possible, the French cabinet to accede to it. Some communications were also made respecting this subject to the marquis, whose influence in securing its adoption by his own government was greatly relied on; and in October, it was for the first time transmitted to General Washington, with a request that he would inclose it by the Marquis de la Fayette, with his observations on it, to Doctor Franklin.

This very extensive plan for the military operations of the ensuing campaign, prepared entirely in the cabinet, without consulting, so far as is known, a single military character, consisted of a variety of parts.

It was resolved to march, as early as the first of June, two separate detachments, consisting each of fifteen hundred infantry, and one hundred cavalry, from Pittsburgh and Wyoming, against Detroit and Niagara. The object of these corps was to be openly avowed, and they were to destroy the towns belonging to the hostile tribes of Indians lying

lying in their route. The troops marching from Wyoming against Niagara were to be met at Anaquaqua by a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men to be collected at Schenectady.

A body of troops were to be stationed on the Mohawk during the winter, for the purpose of preparing every material necessary for building vessels. They were to be reinforced early in the spring by two thousand five hundred men, and were to take possession of Oswego; to launch the vessels constructed of the materials to be prepared during the winter; to secure the navigation of lake Ontario; and to make excursions towards Niagara, for the purpose of alarming the Indian nations, and facilitating the military operations in that quarter.

Several regiments were to be cantoned along the upper parts of Connecticut river, to be recruited during the winter, so as to form a body of five thousand regular troops. Their destination was to be kept a profound secret, and they were to penetrate into Canada by the way of the river François, at the mouth of which a post was to be established, and from thence their attention was to be immediately turned to the reduction of Montreal, St. John's, and the north end of lake Champlain.

These objects being accomplished, they were to co-operate with the troops designed to gain the navigation

navigation of lake Ontario; but as it would be necessary to be guarded against any possible attack from Quebec, they could afford but feeble aid to the operations in that quarter. It was supposed however that a detachment of two thousand men might be spared for this object. These, with as many Canadians as would join them, were to proceed up Cadaroqui, and take a post defensible by about three hundred men, at or near the mouth of lake Ontario. They were then to unite with the troops stationed at Oswego, and, leaving a garrison at that place, march to Niagara, where they were also to be joined by the detachment ordered against Detroit.

Thus far America could proceed unaided by her ally. But this object being accomplished, another campaign would still be necessary for the reduction of Quebec. To carry this on, the army must be wintered in Canada; and, in the mean time, the garrison of Quebec would in all probability be largely reinforced. The difficulties and dangers resulting from this circumstance wore so serious an aspect, as to render it questionable whether it would not be advisable to relinquish the enterprise on an enlarged scale, and to limit themselves to partial expeditions, unless France could be induced to take a part in it.

The conquest of Quebec, and of Halifax, was supposed to be an object of so much importance, both

both to France and the United States, that her aid must be solicited to effect it.

It was proposed that from four to five thousand French troops should sail from Brest in the beginning of May, under convoy of four ships of the line and four frigates. Their destination was to be avowed, but they were to be clothed as if for service in the West Indies, and thick clothes were to be sent after them in August. By the middle of August it was supposed the conquest of Canada might be so far completed, that Halifax might be invested by the ships. A considerable body of American troops might be spared for that service; and if Halifax should fall by the beginning or middle of October, the army might either proceed immediately against Newfoundland, or remain in garrison till the spring, when the conquest of that place might be completed.

It had been supposed probable that the further prosecution of the war on the continent of America would be abandoned by the English; in which case, the government would have at its disposal a respectable force, the advantageous employment of which had engaged in part the attention of the commander in chief. He had contemplated an expedition against the British posts in Upper Canada, as a measure which might be eventually eligible, and which might usefully employ the arms of the United States, if their troops might

might safely be withdrawn from the sea board. He had however considered every object of this sort as contingent, to be pursued or abandoned according to circumstances. To be prepared for a state of things, should it arrive, in which offensive war might be prosecuted without risking too much, he had taken proper measures to inform himself of the state of the garrisons and fortified places in Canada, and of the advantages and disadvantages attending the different routes into that country. He had estimated the difficulties to be encountered in such an enterprise, and had found them so considerable, as to balance on the extent which might safely be given to such an expedition, admitting the United States to be evacuated by the British armies.

In this state of mind, he received the magnificent plan already decided on by Congress, which, with his comments on it, was to be delivered to a French nobleman, and also to be forwarded to the American minister at the court of Versailles. He was forcibly struck with the absolute impracticability of executing that part of it which was to be undertaken by the United States, if the enemy should continue in their country; and with the serious mischief which would result to the common cause, as well from diverting so considerable a part of the French force from other objects to one which was in his opinion so unpromising, as from

from the ill impression which would be made on the French court and nation by the total failure of the American government to execute their part of a plan originating with themselves; a failure which would most probably sacrifice the force employed in it by their ally.

On taking a serious review of the naval force of England and of France, in the different parts of the world, the former appeared to him to maintain a decided superiority, and must consequently possess the ability of shutting up the ships of the latter, which should be trusted into the river St. Lawrence, from whence it would be almost impracticable to escape. Not to avail themselves of this superiority on such an occasion, would argue a blind infatuation or ignorance of the plans of its adversary, which could not safely be assumed in calculations of such serious import.

A plan too, consisting of so many parts, to be prosecuted both from Europe and America, by land and by water, which, to be successful, required such a harmonious co-operation of the whole; such a perfect coincidence of events, appeared to him to be exposed to too many accidents, to risk upon it interests of such high value.

In a very long and serious letter to Congress, he apologized for not obeying their orders in delivering the plan, with his observations on it, to the marquis; and, entering into a perfect investi-

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gation of all its parts, he demonstrated the mischiefs and the dangers with which it was replete. This letter was referred to a committee of Congress.

Their report admits the force of the reasons urged by the commander in chief against the expedition, and the conviction of the committee that nothing important could be attempted, unless the enemy should evacuate the posts they held in the United States; and that even in that event, the present plan was far too complex.

Men however recede slowly, and with difficulty, from favourite and flattering projects once resolved on; and the committee in their report proceeded to state their opinion, that such evacuation would probably take place before the active part of the ensuing campaign. They therefore conceived that eventual measures ought to be taken for the expedition.

Members of Congress probably felt, in some degree, committed by the conversations which had been held on this subject with La Fayette, and with the minister of France. It was probably supposed by no means impossible that the measures already taken had inclined the cabinet of Versailles to engage in the enterprise. This seems to have been in view when, in the conclusion of their report, the committee expressed their opinion to be, "that the question whether any, and what force

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can-or will be sent for the emancipation of Quebec, by his Most Christian Majesty, must depend on circumstances and situations which cannot at present be known on this side the Atlantic; but they conceive it will be in his power to operate with effect for that purpose, and, as well from the importance of the object, as from his former exertions in favour of these states, they doubt not but in such case he will readily afford his assistance.

"That they are therefore of opinion, that the General should be directed to write to the Marquis de la Fayette upon that subject; and also to write to the minister of these states at the court of Versailles very fully, to the end that eventual measures may be taken, in case an armament should be sent from France to Quebec, for co-operating therewith to the utmost degree which the finances and resources of these states will admit."

This report also was approved by Congress, and transmitted to the commander in chief. He felt himself in no small degree embarrassed by it. All his objections to the project framed by Congress remained in full force; yet he found himself called on to open a correspondence for the purpose of soliciting the concurrence of France in an expedition he disapproved, and of promising a co-operation he believed to be impracticable. In reply to this communication he said, "The earnest desire I have strictly to comply in every instance with

with the views and instructions of Congress, cannot but make me feel the greatest uneasiness, when I find myself in circumstances of hesitation or doubt with respect to their directions. But the perfect confidence I have in the justice and candour of that honourable body, emboldens me to communicate without reserve the difficulties which occur in the execution of their present order; and the indulgence I have experienced on every former occasion, induces me to imagine that the liberty I now take will not meet with disapprobation.

"I have attentively taken up the report of the committee of the 5th (approved by Congress) on the subject of my letter of the 11th ultimo, on the proposed expedition into Canada. I have considered it in several lights, and sincerely regret that I should feel myself under any embarrassment in carrying it into execution. Still I remain of opinion, from a general review of things, and the state of our resources, that no extensive system of co-operation with the French for the complete emancipation of Canada, can be positively decided on for the ensuing year. To propose a plan of perfect co-operation with a foreign power, without a moral certainty in our supplies; and to have that plan actually ratified with the court of Versailles, might be attended, in case of failure in the conditions on our part, with very fatal effects.

"If

"If I should seem unwilling to transmit the plan as prepared by Congress with my observations, it is because I find myself under a necessity (in order to give our minister sufficient ground to found an application on), to propose something more than a vague and indecisive plan, which even in the event of a total evacuation of the states by the enemy, may be rendered impracticable in the execution by a variety of insurmountable obstacles; or, if I retain my present sentiments, and act consistently, I must point out the difficulties, as they appear to me, which must embarrass his negotiations, and may disappoint the views of Congress.

"But proceeding on the idea of the enemy's leaving these states, before the active part of the ensuing campaign, I should fear to hazard a mistake, as to the precise aim, and extent of the views of Congress. The conduct I am to observe in writing to our minister at the court of France, does not appear sufficiently delineated. Were I to undertake it, I should be much afraid of erring through misconception. In this dilemma, I would esteem it a particular favour to be excused from writing at all on the subject, especially as it is the part of candour in me to acknowledge, that I do not see my way clear enough, to point out such a plan for co-operation, as I conceive to be consistent with the ideas of Congress, and as will be

sufficiently

sufficiently explanatory, with respect to time and circumstances, to give efficacy to the measure.

"But if Congress still think it necessary for me to proceed in the business, I must request their more definitive and explicit instructions, and that they will permit me, previous to transmitting the intended dispatches, to submit them to their determination.

"I could wish to lay before Congress more minutely the state of the army, the condition of our supplies, and the requisites necessary for carrying into execution an undertaking that may involve the most serious events. If Congress think this can be done more satisfactorily in a personal conference, I hope to have the army in such a situation before I can receive their answer, as to afford me an opportunity of giving my attendance."

On receiving this letter, Congress acceded to his request of a personal interview; and, on his arrival in Philadelphia, a committee of their body was appointed to confer with him, as well on this particular subject, as on the general state of the army, and of the country.

The result of these conferences was, that the expedition against Canada was entirely, though very reluctantly* given up; and every arrange-

* The following is the report made by the committee:—

"January 1st, 1779. The committee appointed to confer with the commander in chief on the operations of the next campaign,

ment recommended by the commander in chief, received the attention to which his judgment and experience gave all his opinions the fairest claim.

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campaign, report, "That the plan proposed by Congress for the emancipation of Canada, in co-operation with an army from France, was the principal subject of the said conference.

"That impressed with a strong sense of the injury and disgrace which must attend an infraction of the proposed stipulations on the part of these states, your committee have taken a general review of our finances; of the circumstances of our army; of the magazines of clothes, artillery, arms, and ammunition, and of the provisions in store, and which can be collected in season.

"Your committee have also attentively considered the intelligence and observations communicated to them by the commander in chief, respecting the number of troops, and strong holds of the enemy in Canada; their naval force, and entire command of the water communication with that country; the difficulties, while they possess such signal advantages, of penetrating it with an army by land; the obstacles which are to be surmounted in acquiring a naval superiority; the hostile temper of many of the surrounding Indian tribes towards these states; and, above all, the uncertainty whether the enemy will not persevere in their system of harassing and distressing our sea-coast and frontiers, by a predatory war.

"That on the most mature deliberation, your committee cannot find room for a well-grounded presumption, that these states will be able to perform their part of the proposed stipulations. That in a measure of such moment, calculated to call forth, and direct to a single object, a considerable portion of the force of our ally, which may otherwise be essentially employed, nothing else than the highest probability of success could justify Congress in making the proposition.

"Your

"Your committee are therefore of opinion, that the negotiation in question, however desirable and interesting, should be deferred till circumstances render the co-operation of these states more certain, practicable, and effectual.

"That the minister plenipotentiary of these states at the court of Versailles, the minister of France in Pennsylvania, and the minister of France, be respectively informed, that the operations of the next campaign must depend on such a variety of contingencies, to arise as well from our own internal circumstances and resources, as the progress and movements of our enemy, that time alone can mature and point out the plan which ought to be pursued.

"That Congress, therefore, cannot, with a degree of confidence answerable to the magnitude of the object, decide on the practicability of their co-operating the next campaign in an enterprise for the emancipation of Canada. That every preparation in our power will nevertheless be made for acting with vigour against the common enemy, and every favourable incident embraced with alacrity to facilitate and hasten the freedom and independence of Canada, and her union with these states; events, which Congress, from motives of policy with respect to the United States, as well as of affection for their Canadian brethren, have greatly at heart."

CHAPTER II.

Divisions in Congress—Letters from General Washington on the state of public affairs—Invasion of Georgia—General Howe defeated by the British under Colonel Campbell, who takes possession of Savannah—Sunbury surrenders to General Prevost—The state of Georgia reduced—General Lincoln takes the command of the southern army—Major Gardner defeated by General Moultrie—Insurrection of the tories in South Carolina; who are defeated by Colonel Pickens—Ash surprised and defeated by Prevost—Prevost compels Moultrie to retreat—Lincoln attacks the British at the ferry, but without success—Invasion of Virginia by General Mathews.

WE have perceived that, in the course of the preceding year, (1778,) operations of great magnitude, requiring large supplies of men and of money, had been meditated against Canada, without any just estimate of the resources of the government; and that Congress was, with infinite difficulty, prevailed upon to relinquish them. Having reluctantly given up these grand and extensive views of conquest, the remaining objects, though of the utmost importance, seemed insufficient to call forth the energies of the nation; and a general languor appeared to diffuse itself through all the civil departments. The alliance with France

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was believed to have secured independence; and a confidence that the enemy could no longer prosecute the war with any reasonable hope of success, prevented those exertions which were practicable, but which it was painful to make. Believing what they wished, the contest seemed drawing to its close, and the means to ensure its successful termination were too unpleasant to be employed but in the last necessity. This temper was seen and deplored by the commander in chief, who incessantly combated the opinion that Great Britain was about to relinquish the contest; and insisted that only great and vigorous exertions on the part of America could terminate the war.

The wretched policy of short enlistments, into which many causes had combined to betray the American governments, had been persevered in till it was no longer in their power to correct its mischiefs. The enthusiasm felt at the commencement of the contest, under the influence of which all personal considerations were overlooked, and the common cause was deemed the cause of each individual, had in a great measure passed away, and had been succeeded by calculations of a colder but more lasting character. When, at length, the resolution was formed to enlist an army for the war, the power to execute it no longer existed. Few were found who would engage voluntarily in the service, and coercion was an expedient at-

tended with too much hazard to be extensively employed. Apprehensions of danger were entertained, from forcing men into the army for three years, or during the war; and the vacant ranks were scantily supplied with drafts, for nine, twelve, and eighteen months. The evil therefore still continued; and except that the old officers remained, almost a new army was to be raised for every campaign.

The commander in chief, always provident for the future, was uniformly earnest in his representations to Congress, and to the several states, on this important subject. His letters continually and urgently pressed them to take timely measures for supplying the places of those who were leaving the service. But the means adopted were so much more slow and ineffectual in their operation than was expected by those who devised them, that the season for action never found the preparations of America completed; and the necessity of struggling against superior numbers was almost perpetual.

The pleasing delusion that the war was over, to which the public mind delighted to surrender itself, made no impression on the judgment of Washington. Viewing objects through a more correct medium, he perceived that Britain had yet much to hope, and America much to fear, from a continuance of hostilities. The commissioners were about

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to return, and he was extremely apprehensive of the impression which the divisions and apparent inertness of the United States would make upon them; an impression which they would certainly communicate to their government. These considerations increased his anxiety in favour of early and vigorous preparations for the next campaign. Yet it was not till the 23d of January, 1779, that Congress passed the resolution, authorizing the commander in chief to re-enlist the army; nor till the ninth of the following March that the requisition was made on the several states for their quotas. The bounty offered by the first resolution being found insufficient to bring men into the field, the government of the union was again under the necessity of resorting to the states. Thus, at a season when the men ought to have been in camp, the measures for raising them were still to be adopted; and, of consequence, the public service was exposed to infinite hazard and injury from such delays.

About this period, several circumstances conspired to foment those pernicious divisions and factions in Congress, which, in times of greater danger, patriotism would, most probably, have silenced.

The diplomatic characters employed in Europe had reciprocally criminated each other, and some of them had been recalled. Their friends in Congress

gress supported their respective interests with considerable animation; and at length Mr. Deane, who, at a very early period, had been employed in France, and who had been concerned in negotiating the treaties of alliance and of commerce with his Most Christian Majesty, published a paper, in which he arraigned before the bar of the public, the conduct, not only of those concerned in foreign negotiations, but of the members o Congress themselves.

The irritation excited by these and other contests were not a little increased by the appearance of an extract from a letter published in New York, as having been written by Mr. Laurens, the president of Congress, to Governor Huiston of Georgia. During the invasion of that state, this letter was said to have been found among the papers of the governor. In it Mr. Laurens had unbosomed himself with the unsuspecting confidence of a person communicating to a friend the inmost operations of his mind. In a moment of gloom, probably produced by what he deemed the inattention of Congress to objects of infinite magnitude, he had expressed himself with a degree of severity, which even his own opinion, when not under the immediate influence of chagrin, would not entirely justify. This letter contained reflections upon the integrity and patriotism of members, without particularizing the individuals he designed to censure;

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and was by no means calculated to soften the asperities already existing in Congress.

These altercations always give a momentary appearance of magnitude to objects merely personal, and too often diminish and remove to a distance, those of real importance, and of the most permanent interest.

Instead of feeling that security which had insinuated itself into the public mind, General Washington viewed the existing state of things with serious alarm, and his endeavours were unremitting to impress the same opinion on those who might be supposed capable of removing this delusion. In his confidential letters to the most influential characters in the several states, he represented in strong terms the real dangers which yet threatened the ultimate success of the revolution, and earnestly exhorted them to a continuance of those sacrifices and exertions which he still deemed essential to the happy termination of the war. The dissensions in Congress; the removal of individuals of the highest influence and character from the councils of the union to offices in the respective state governments; the depreciation of the paper currency; the destructive spirit of speculation which the imaginary gain produced by this depreciation had diffused throughout the union; a general laxity of principle; and an indisposition to encounter personal inconvenience for the attainment

ment of the great object in pursuit of which so much blood and treasure had already been expended; were the rocks on which he was apprehensive the state vessel might yet split, and to which he incessantly endeavoured to point the attention of those whose weight of political character enabled them to guide the helm.

"I am particularly desirous of a free communication of sentiments with you at this time," says the general in a letter written to a very respectable friend, and a gentleman of splendid political talents, "because I view things very differently, I fear, from what people in general do, who seem to think the contest at an end, and that to make money and get places are the only things now remaining to be done. I have seen without despondency, even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities, when I have thought her liberties in such imminent danger as at present. Friends and foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expence of so much time, blood and treasure; and unless the bodies politic will exert themselves to bring things back to first principles, correct abuses, and punish our internal foes, inevitable ruin must follow. Indeed we seem to be verging so fast to destruction, that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a

stranger

stranger till within these three months. Our enemy behold with exultation and joy how effectually we labour for their benefit; and from being in a state of absolute despair, and on the point of evacuating America, are now on tiptoe. Nothing therefore, in my judgment, can save us but a total reformation in our own conduct, or some decisive turn of affairs in Europe. The former, alas! to our shame be it spoken, is less likely to happen than the latter; as it is now consistent with the views of the speculators, various tribes of money-makers, and stock-jobbers of all denominations, to continue the war for their own private emolument, without considering that this avarice and thirst for gain must plunge every thing, including themselves, in one common ruin.

"Were I to indulge my present feelings, and give a loose to that freedom of expression which my unreserved friendship for you would prompt to, I should say a great deal on this subject. But letters are liable to so many accidents, and the sentiments of men in office are sought after by the enemy with so much avidity, and, besides conveying useful knowledge (if they get into their hands) for the superstructure of their plans, are so often perverted to the worst of purposes, that I shall be somewhat reserved, notwithstanding this letter goes by a private hand to Mount Vernon. I cannot refrain lamenting, however, in the most poignant

nant terms, the fatal policy too prevalent in most of the states, of employing their ablest men at home in posts of honour or profit, before the great national interest is fixed upon a solid basis.

"To me it appears no unjust simile, to compare the affairs of this great continent to the mechanism of a clock, each state representing some one or other of the smaller parts of it, which they are endeavouring to put in fine order, without considering how useless and unavailing their labour is, unless the great wheel, or spring, which is to set the whole in motion, is also well attended to and kept in good order. I allude to no particular state, nor do I mean to cast reflections upon any one of them, nor ought I, it may be said, to do so upon their representatives; but as it is a fact too notorious to be concealed, that Congress is rent by party; that much business of a trifling nature and personal concern withdraws their attention from matters of great national moment at this critical period; when it is also known that idleness and dissipation take place of close attention and application; no man who wishes well to the liberties of this country, and desires to see its rights established, can avoid crying out,—Where are our men of abilities? why do they not come forth to save their country? Let this voice, my dear Sir, call upon you, Jefferson, and others. Do not, from a mistaken opinion that we are to sit down under

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our own vine and fig-tree, let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignominy. Believe me when I tell you there is danger of it. I have pretty good reasons for thinking that administration, a little while ago, had resolved to give the matter up, and negotiate a peace with us upon almost any terms; but I shall be much mistaken if they do not now, from the present state of our currency, dissensions, and other circumstances, push matters to the utmost extremity. Nothing, I am sure, will prevent it but the interruption of Spain, and their disappointed hope from Russia."

Those circumstances in the situation and temper of America, which made so deep an impression on the commander in chief, unquestionably operated on the British commissioners, so as to induce them to think that, by continuing the war, terms short of the absolute independence of America might be obtained. They seem to have taken up the opinion, that the great body of the people, fatigued and worn out by the complicated calamities experienced during the revolutionary struggle, sincerely desired an accommodation on the terms proposed by Great Britain; and that the increasing difficulties which must necessarily result from the failure of public credit, would induce them to desert Congress, or compel that body to accede to those terms. These opinions were certainly erroneous, but were not entirely unsupported

unsupported by circumstances; and, being communicated to the government, most probably contributed essentially to protract the war.

We must now return to the military transactions of the United States.

The British arms had heretofore been almost entirely directed against the northern and middle states. The strongest and most populous parts of the American continent were pressed by their whole force, and, with the exception of the attempt on Sullivan's island in 1776, no serious design had yet been manifested to make an impression on the southern and western parts of the union. The war had been commenced in the north, which was deemed the cradle of opposition, in the hope that the colonies not immediately attacked would not readily engage in it, nor make a common cause with those whom it was determined to humble. It seems to have been prosecuted in that quarter with the expectation, that if the northern states could be reannexed to the British empire, the southern must fall without a struggle.

The most confident hopes of complete conquest had been entertained, and therefore the war had never been prosecuted with a view to the recovery of only a part of the British dominions in America. But the loss of the army commanded by Burgoyne, the alliance with France, and the unexpect-

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ed obstinacy with which the contest was maintained, had diminished the confidence which had been felt at the commencement of hostilities; and when the pacific propositions of 1778 were rejected, the resolution seems to have been taken to adopt, for the future, a plan of operations materially different from that which had been so long and so unsuccessfully pursued.

It seems to have been determined in the British cabinet, that possession of the islands about the Hudson should be maintained; but that their arms should be principally directed against the southern states, which were less capable of resistance, and on which a very considerable impression might with great certainty be made.

It was not unreasonable to suppose that the influence of this impression would extend itself northward; but, however this might be, the actual conquest and possession of several states, when negotiations for a general peace should be entered into, would give a complexion to those negotiations, and afford plausible ground for insisting to retain territory already acquired. It seemed possible to regain the more rich, though less populous country of the south, however the war might terminate with respect to the northern and middle states. Of the succeeding campaigns, therefore, the most active and interesting operations were in the southern country.

Lieutenant-

Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, who sailed from the Hook about the end of November, escorted by a small squadron under the command of Commodore Hyde Parker, reached the isle of Tybee, near the Savannah (the river which separates Georgia from South Carolina) on the 23d of December; and in a few days the fleet with the transports got over the bar, and anchored in the river within the light-house of Tybee.

The command of the southern army, composed of the troops of South Carolina and Georgia, had been committed to Major-general Robert Howe. In the course of the preceding summer he had invaded East Florida. The diseases incident to the climate made such ravages among his raw soldiers, unused to the precautions necessary for the preservation of health, that, though he had but little more than seen an enemy, he found himself compelled to hasten out of the country with very considerable loss. After this disastrous enterprise, his army, consisting of between six and seven hundred continental troops, aided by a few hundred militia, had taken post in the neighbourhood of the town of Savannah, then the capital of Georgia, situated on the southern bank of the river bearing that name.

The country about the mouth of the river is one tract of deep marsh, intersected by creeks and cuts of water, impassable for troops at any time of the

the tide, except over causeways extending through the sunk ground.

Without much opposition Lieutenant-colonel Campbell effected a landing at Gerido's plantation, about three miles below the town of Savannah; upon which Howe drew up his army half a mile east of the town, across the main road, so as in some degree to flank it. His left was secured by the river; in addition to which it was strengthened by the fort of Savannah-bluff, behind this wing, in manner of a second flank. Along the whole extent of his front was a morass which stretched to his right, and was believed by him to be impassable for such a distance as effectually to secure that wing. A bridge, over which the road through this morass led, had been taken up, and a trench had also been cut across the causeway, for the purpose of further embarrassing the advance of the enemy. The town of Savannah, round which were the remains of an old line of entrenchment, covered his rear. One piece of artillery was placed on his right, one on his left, and two occupied the traverse across the great road in the centre of his line.

In this position he expected the enemy; and such were the advantages of his situation, that, notwithstanding his inferiority of numbers, he might, without being over-sanguine, count on being able to maintain his ground.

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After reconnoitring the country, Colonel Campbell advanced on the great road leading to Savannah, and about three in the afternoon appeared in sight of the American army. While making dispositions to dislodge it, he accidentally fell in with a negro who informed him of a private path leading through the swamp round the right of the American lines, into their rear. Of this route, which seems to have been entirely unknown to General Howe, he immediately determined to avail himself. The situation of the ground was favourable to the execution of this determination. It enabled him to conceal in part the movements of his troops, and to detach to his left a column under Sir James Baird, entirely unperceived by Howe.

As soon as Sir James cleared the swamp, he attacked and dispers d a body of Georgia militia, which gave the first notice to the American general of the danger that threatened his rear. At the same instant the British troops in his front were put in motion, and the artillery began to play upon him. A retreat, which had now become extremely difficult, was immediately ordered. The continental troops were under the necessity of running across a plain, in front of the corps which had been led into their rear by Sir James Baird, who attacked their flanks with great impetuosity and considerable execution. Those who escaped retreated

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up the Savannah, and crossing that river at Zubly's ferry, took refuge in South Carolina.*

This victory was complete, and decisive in its consequences. About one hundred of the Americans were either killed in the field, or drowned in attempting to escape through a deep swamp in their way. Thirty-eight officers and four hundred and fifteen privates were taken. Forty-eight pieces of cannon, twenty-three mortars, the fort, with all its military stores, a large quantity of provisions collected for the use of the southern army, and the capital of Georgia, fell, on the day of the action, into the hands of the enemy. These advantages were obtained at no other expence than the loss of seven killed and nineteen wounded.

No military force now remaining in Georgia except the garrison of Sunbury, whose retreat to South Carolina was entirely cut off, all the lower part of that state fell into the hands of the enemy, who adopted measures to preserve the conquest they had made. A degree of lenity seldom experienced in the course of the war by the vanquished, was used towards the inhabitants generally. Their property was spared, and their persons protected. To make the best use of the victory which had been obtained, and of the favourable impression

* At a late period of the war a court of inquiry was ordered on General Howe, who acquitted him of all blame.

produced by the moderation displayed after that victory, a proclamation was issued inviting the inhabitants to repair to the British standard, and offering protection to those who would return to their allegiance. This proclamation enlarged on those topics which were calculated to promote the British interest with the mass of the people, and with it were also published forms of the oath to be administered, and of the certificate to be given to those who should accept the proffered terms.

The effects of these measures did not disappoint those who adopted them. The inhabitants in great numbers flocked in to the royal standard; military corps for the protection of the country were formed, and posts were established for a considerable distance up the river.

The northern frontier of Georgia being supposed to be settled into a state of quiet, and such a disposition made of the troops as was thought best calculated to shut up all the avenues leading from South Carolina, Colonel Campbell turned his attention towards Sunbury, and was about proceeding against that place, when he received the intelligence of its having surrendered to General Prevost.

Sir Henry Clinton, when he planned the southern expedition, had ordered General Prevost to cooperate from East Florida with Colonel Campbell. That officer immediately collected all the force which

which could be spared from the defence of St. Augustine, and, on hearing that the troops from the north were off the coast, he immediately entered the southern frontier of Georgia, and invested Sunbury, which, after a slight resistance, surrendered at discretion. Having placed a garrison in this fort, he proceeded to Savannah, and took command of the army from New York, to which was now added the force he had conducted from East Florida. Colonel Campbell was immediately detached with about eight hundred regulars and a few provincials to Augusta, of which place he took possession without any difficulty, and thus the whole state of Georgia was reduced.

While the expedition conducted by Colonel Campbell against the southern states was preparing in New York, Congress was meditating the conquest of East Florida.

The delegates of South Carolina and Georgia, anxious that a general of more experience than Howe should command in the southern districts, had earnestly pressed that he should be recalled, and that General Lincoln, who had been second in command in the army which captured Burgoyne, and whose military reputation was high, should be appointed to succeed him. In compliance with their solicitations, Howe was ordered, in September 1778, to repair to the head-quarters of General Washington, and Lincoln was directed

to proceed immediately to Charlestown, in South Carolina, in order to take command in the southern districts. On the same day Congress passed a resolution requesting the executive powers of Virginia and North Carolina to give all possible aid to South Carolina and Georgia.

Soon after the passing of this resolution, General Lincoln set out for Charlestown, where he found the military affairs of the country in a state of utter derangement. Congress had been so remiss, or had so misjudged on the public interests, as to have established no continental military chest in the southern districts. The effect of this omission was a dependance on the civil authority of the state for supplies which should enable the army to move on any emergency; and a subjection, in a great degree, of the troops in continental service to the control of the state government. The militia, though taken into continental pay, considered themselves as subject only to the military code of the state. These regulations threatened to embarras the movements in the field, and to embroil the military with the civil authority.

While General Lincoln was labouring to make arrangements for the ensuing campaign, he received intelligence of the appearance of the enemy off the coast. So promptly was the requisition of Congress on Virginia and North Carolina complied with by the latter of those states, that two thousand men raised by her in conformity therewith,

with, had marched under Generals Ash and Rutherford, and had reached Charlestown before the appearance of Commodore Parker off the coast.

But unfortunately the state of North Carolina had taken no measures to provide her militia with arms; and Congress had been unable to lay up magazines in this division of the union. The troops under Ash and Rutherford were therefore entirely dependant on South Carolina for every military equipment. That state, being more exposed to invasion, had been more provident in preparing to meet it. Her supplies, however, were not so abundant as to exceed her own probable demand; and this circumstance, added perhaps to a wish that the reinforcement from North Carolina should remain in the neighbourhood of Charlestown, till it should be apparent that the operations of the enemy were directed against some other object, induced the executive of the state to withhold the delivery of the arms, till it was too late to save the capital of Georgia.

As soon however as it was ascertained that the British fleet had entered the Savannah river, every possible exertion was made to put the troops in Charlestown in motion, and General Lincoln proceeded at their head with the utmost expedition towards the enemy. On his march he received intelligence of the victory gained over General Howe; soon after which he was joined by the broken remnant

remnant of the defeated army, at Purysburg, a small town on the north side of the Savannah, about thirty miles above its mouth.

At Purysburg General Lincoln established his head-quarters, and while waiting for those reinforcements which might enable him to attempt the recovery of Georgia, he contented himself with protecting the state of South Carolina. The regular force commanded by General Prevost must have amounted to at least three thousand effective men, and this number was increased by irregulars who had joined him in Georgia. A return of the army of General Lincoln, made on the first of February, exhibited a total of three thousand six hundred and thirty-nine, of whom two thousand four hundred and twenty-eight rank and file were effectives. Of these one thousand one hundred and twenty-one were continental troops and new levies. The rest were militia, unused to the necessary discipline of a camp, and unwilling to submit to it.

The theatre of action was so well fitted for defensive war, that although General Prevost was decidedly superior to his adversary, both in the number and quality of his troops, it was difficult to extend his conquests into South Carolina. The river Savannah, which divided the two armies, could not be crossed by either without great difficulty and hazard. Though its channel is narrow,

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it passes for one hundred miles from its mouth through a marshy country, which is often overflowed to an extent of from two to four miles. At no one place is to be found firm land on the opposite sides of the river; and the few narrow causeways which lead through the marsh, and which are the only fords, are often impassable for an army. It would therefore have been dangerous to cross the river without a force competent to maintain itself in the country invaded; since a retreat from it, in the face of a superior army, would have been almost impossible. This circumstance disabled General Lincoln from attempting to strike at any of the British posts, although they extended from Savannah to Augusta.

An attempt was made by the enemy to penetrate into South Carolina by way of the sea-coast. For this purpose Major Gardiner was detached with about two hundred men to take possession of the island of Port Royal. Soon after he had reached the place of destination, he was attacked by General Moultrie, and compelled to retreat with considerable loss. From the statement of this skirmish made by that officer, it would seem that the party of Major Gardiner must have been entirely destroyed, had not the Americans been prevented by the want of ammunition from availing themselves of the advantage they had gained. In this action the Charlestown militia behaved very gallantly,

lantly, and the company of artillery distinguished itself in a particular manner. This repulse checked the views of Genoral Prevost on South Carolina, and for some time he made no further attempts to pass the limits of Georgia.

From the commencement of the war, a considerable proportion of the people inhabiting the western frontier of the three southern states had been attached to the royal cause. The first successes of the British were soon communicated to them, and they were invited to assemble and join the king's standard at Augusta. That port was probably taken, in some measure, with a view to favour any movements which might be made by the disaffected in the back country. Emissaries who were dispersed among them encouraged the opinion that by a vigorous co-operation with the king's troops, the royal authority might be re-established; and that such of them as had been compelled to take refuge even among the Indians, in order to avoid the punishment due to their former practices, might be enabled to return in triumph to their homes. About seven hundred of them actually embodied themselves in the back parts of South Carolina, and began their march for Augusta.

Depending on plunder for subsistence, they made the impression rather of a disorderly banditti than of a military force, and necessarily armed

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all the orderly inhabitants against them. The militia of the neighbouring country having collected under Colonel Pickins, came up with and attacked them near Kittle Creek. The insurgents were defeated with considerable loss, and Colonel Boyd their leader was among the killed. Several of those who escaped were apprehended and tried as traitors. Seventy were condemned, five of whom, the most notorious offenders, were executed. About three hundred remaining in an entire body reached the British outposts, and joined the royal standard. This defeat broke for a time the spirits of the tories, and preserved the quiet of the western country.

As the American army gained strength by reinforcements of militia drawn from the Carolinas, General Lincoln began to contemplate offensive operations. It was an object of real magnitude to secure the upper country, and to restrict the enemy to narrower limits. A respectable division of his troops, consisting of about fourteen hundred men, of whom one hundred were continentals, was therefore stationed nearly opposite to Augusta, under General Ash; and he proposed joining that officer, as soon as a sufficient force could be collected, for the purpose of crossing the Savannah above that place, and obliging the enemy to evacuate the upper parts of Georgia. Before he was able to execute this plan, General Prevost,

apprehensive

apprehensive of danger from the great extent of his line, withdrew his troops from Augusta; and fell back to Hudson's-ferry, about twenty-four miles above Ebenezer, now become the head-quarters of the royal army.

Persevering in his design of covering the upper parts of Georgia, and desirous also of drawing Ash near enough to him for the purpose of co-operation, Lincoln ordered the detachment commanded by that officer to cross the Savannah, and take post near the junction of Briar Creek with that river. This camp appeared to be unassailable by any direct attack; and precautions were taken to protect it against a surprise, and to secure a retreat if it should become advisable. The left was covered by a deep swamp, and by the Savannah. The whole front was completely secured by Briar creek, which is about sixty yards wide, is unfordable for several miles above, as well as at this place, and, diverging gradually from the river, makes with it a very acute angle. That intelligence of every movement of the enemy might certainly be obtained, a corps of cavalry consisting of two hundred men was added to the detachment; and, for facilitating a retreat if it should become necessary, the baggage was removed to the north side of the river.

The bridge over the creek at this place had been broken down by the British troops on retiring into

into the lower country, and preparations were making to repair it; but the work had not been effected when Prevost determined to dislodge the Americans from a position in every respect so well chosen. Having formed this resolution, he made dispositions at the same time to keep up the attention of General Lincoln by the semblance of a design to cross the Savannah, and to amuse General Ash with a feint on his front; while Lieutenant-colonel Prevost, by whom the real attack was to be made, took a circuit of about fifty miles, and, crossing Briar-creek fifteen miles above the ground occupied by Ash, came down unperceived and unsuspected on his rear. Unused to the stratagems of war, Ash was so completely engaged by the manœuvres in his front, that Lieutenant-colonel Prevost was almost in the camp before any intelligence of his approach was received. The continental troops under General Elbert were drawn out to oppose him, and commenced the action with great gallantry. But most of the militia threw away their arms, and fled in confusion. As they precipitated themselves into the swamp, and swam over the river, not many of them were taken. General Elbert and his small band of continental troops, aided by only one of the regiments of North Carolina militia, could maintain the action but a short time. Being unsupported, they were soon overpowered by numbers, and the survivors were compelled

compelled to surrender themselves prisoners of war. On this occasion the killed and taken amounted to between three and four hundred men. General Elbert, and Colonel Mackintosh, both in the continental service, were among the latter. But the loss sustained by the American army was much more considerable. The militia being dispersed, many of them, instead of rejoining their corps, returned to their homes. Not more than four hundred and fifty of them could be reassembled.

This victory, which cost the British in killed and wounded only one officer and fifteen privates, restored their communication with the Indians, and with their friends in the back country; and was supposed to give them such complete possession of Georgia, that a proclamation was issued the succeeding day by General Prevost, establishing civil government in that state, appointing the executive and judicial officers for its administration, and declaring the laws, as they existed at the close of the year 1775, to be in force, and to continue in force till they should be altered by a legislature to be afterwards convened.

The disasters which had attended their arms, instead of terrifying the South Carolinians into submission, animated them to greater exertions, and to a more determined resistance. Mr. John Rutledge, a gentleman of great talents, influence, and decision,

decision, who had taken a strong and early part in the revolution, was elected governor; and the constitutional powers of the executive being deemed inadequate to the exigency, it was invested with such as were almost unlimited, by a legislative act empowering the governor and council to do every thing that appeared to him and them necessary for the public good. All the energies of the state were now drawn forth. The militia were called out in greater numbers, and the laws for their government were rendered more severe.

Thus reinforced, General Lincoln resumed his original plan of recovering the upper parts of Georgia; and for this purpose marched the main body of his army up the Savannah. In addition to the general objects to be effected by this movement, he was particularly induced to make it at this time, by a wish to afford his protection to the legislature of the state of Georgia, which was to assemble at Augusta on the first of May.

The Savannah now extended to a great distance beyond its usual limits; and the swamps, marshes, and creeks, which intersect the country, being every where full, seemed to present an almost impassable barrier to an invading army. A small military force being deemed sufficient to arrest the progress of the enemy through a route so extremely difficult, if at all practicable, not more than eight hundred of the state militia, aided by about

about two hundred continental troops under Colonel M'Intosh, who was now exchanged, were left with General Moultrie, to whom the defence of the country was intrusted. This officer had distinguished himself in the defence of Sullivan's Island; he had given frequent proofs of courage, and had deservedly acquired a high place in the good opinion of the public, and of General Lincoln. It was also expected that the force under his command would receive great additions from the militia of the country, if an attempt should be made to penetrate into those parts.

General Prevost seems to have been aware of the importance of the movement now made by the American army. He was sensible that by retaining his position, he must abandon the whole upper country; and that should he march to Augusta, the struggle for Georgia would be doubtful and hazardous. He thought that the most certain mode of recalling Lincoln, and of recovering the advantages of which the present manœuvre was designed to deprive him, would be to pass the Savannah himself, and to alarm his adversary for the safety of Charlestown. Having taken this resolution, he suddenly crossed the river with about three thousand men; and advancing rapidly on General Moultrie, obliged him to retreat with precipitation. The militia did not display the fortitude expected from them. They could not be prevailed

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on to defend the several passes in the way of the enemy with any degree of obstinacy; and instead of deriving increase of numbers from the surrounding country, Moultrie sustained an alarming diminution of force by desertion.

Immediately on the passage of the river by Prevost, an express had been detached to Lincoln, then nearly opposite Augusta, informing him of that circumstance. Persuaded that the British general could meditate no serious attempt on Charlestown, and that the real object was to induce him to abandon the enterprise in which he was engaged, he detached a reinforcement of three hundred light troops to the aid of Moultrie; and, crossing the Savannah himself, continued his march down the south side of the river towards the capital of Georgia. He was induced to make this movement, not only from a conviction that by appearing to adhere steadily to his purposes he should recal Prevost to the defence of Georgia, but also from the reflection that, should the result not justify this opinion, his road to Charlestown would not be much lengthened by the course he had determined to pursue.

Though the original purpose of General Prevost had been limited to objects far short of the conquest of South Carolina, the opposition he experienced was so much less than had been expected; the terror he impressed on the country was so apparent;

parent; the assurances he received from those who flocked to his standard of the improbability of encountering any effectual resistance, and of the general disposition of the people to terminate by submission the calamities of war, were so often and so confidently repeated; that he was emboldened to extend his plan of operations to greater objects than he had at first contemplated, and resolved to hazard the continuation of his march to Charlestown.

Intelligence of the threatening aspect of affairs in South Carolina being conveyed to Lincoln, he immediately re-crossed the Savannah, and hastened to the relief of that state. Prevost was, however, several days march in his front; and the most serious fears were entertained, that he could not possibly arrive in time to prevent the complete success of the enterprise.

The situation of Charlestown was extremely critical. Entirely unapprehensive of an attack by land from an army marching through the country, the whole attention of the place had been directed to its protection against an invasion by sea; and the approaches on the land side, down the neck formed by Ashley and Cooper rivers, which unite in a bay just below the town, had been left undefended. General Lincoln was at too great a distance to afford immediate aid; and a considerable portion of the militia of the country, commanded by

by the governor in person, had been collected in Orangeburg, high up the north fork of the Edisto, as a central part of the state, whence he might with the greatest facility march to the point most imminently endangered.

Had the original plan of Prevost comprehended Charlestown, he would unquestionably have continued his march with the same rapidity with which it was commenced, in which event that place must inevitably have fallen. But this having formed no part of the original design with which he crossed the Savannah, he halted after having gained more than half the distance, and consumed two or three days in deliberating on his future measures. While the intelligence he received determined him to proceed, and assured him of a state of things which rendered success almost certain, that state of things was rapidly changing. Fortifications on the land side were commenced, and prosecuted with the most unremitting labour; lines of defence were drawn from Ashley to Cowper rivers; a numerous artillery was placed in them, in addition to which they were flanked by armed galleys, stationed in the two rivers. The neighbouring militia were drawn into the town; the reinforcement detached by General Lincoln, and the legion of Putaski, arrived; and the governor also entered the city at the head of the troops which had been stationed at Orangeburg.

The next morning Prevost crossed Ashley river, and marching down the neck, took a station just beyond cannon-shot of the works. The town was summoned to surrender; and time being deemed by Governor Rutledge of the utmost importance, the day was spent in sending and receiving flags. The neutrality of South Carolina during the war, leaving the question whether that state should finally belong to Great Britain or to the United States, to be settled in the treaty of peace, was proposed on the part of the garrison, and rejected by Prevost, who required that they should surrender themselves prisoners of war. This proposition being also rejected, the garrison prepared against an assault. But an attempt to carry the works by storm was too hazardous to be made; and Prevost came to the prudent resolution of decamping that very night, and re-crossing Ashley river. This he effected unmolested by the garrison, who remained in their lines under the constant apprehension of being attacked.

To avoid the serious obstacles to a retreat by land into Georgia, the British army passed into the island of St. James, and thence to that of St. John's; both of which lie to the southward of Charlestown harbour, and afforded good quarters and an abundant supply of provisions to the troops.

As the British army took post in St. John's island,

island, General Lincoln encamped at no great distance from it, and about thirty miles from Charlestown, so as, in a great degree, to confine them to the island they occupied. This island is separated from the main land by an inlet, to which has been given the name of Stono river; and the communication between the one and the other is preserved by a ferry. Upon the main land, at this ferry, a British post was established, and works were thrown up in front for its defence. This position appeared too strong to be attacked while their whole army lay in its neighbourhood. But when the retreat commenced, and the troops were generally engaged in moving from island to island, and in establishing the posts designed to be held during the sickly season—an operation which gave such full employment to the major part of their shipping, as in some small degree to impede the passing of reinforcements from St. John's to the main land—the occasion seemed a fair one for attacking the post at the ferry. This post was now defended only by Lieutenant-colonel Maitland, with about eight hundred men; but a large corps still lay on the island. To afford a probability of success to the enterprise, it was necessary to prevent the troops on the island from supporting those on the main land. For this purpose, orders were given to General Moultrie, who commanded in Charlestown, to pass over a body of militia into James's

island, who should amuse the enemy in St. John's, while a real attack was to be made on the party stationed at the ferry.

About seven in the morning, General Lincoln commenced the attack. His right was composed of the militia of North and South Carolina, and in his left were placed his continental soldiers. This disposition was made for the purpose of opposing the latter to the Highlanders, who were deemed the best troops in the British service, and who formed their right. The Virginia militia, and some light-horse, constituted a *corps de reserve*. His whole force amounted to one thousand men. The continental troops were ordered not to fire a musket, but to storm the lines with fixed bayonets. These orders, however, could not be executed. The fire began on the right; and as it advanced to the left, the utmost efforts of the officers could not stop its continuance through the line, and it soon became general. A gallant attempt was made by the Highlanders to turn Lincoln's left flank; but they were driven back to their works with loss, and the action was continued with spirit on both sides. Perceiving that strong reinforcements were crossing over from the island, after the arrival of which no hope of success could be reasonably entertained, General Lincoln called off his troops, and retreated unmolested to his old ground.

General Moultrie had been unable to execute in time

time that part of the plan which devolved on him. Boats were not in readiness for crossing over into James island, and consequently the feint on St. John's was not made. This circumstance leaving the enemy at leisure to collect their whole force at the ferry, that post was rendered completely tenable against the army which assailed it.

The returns made by General Lincoln state his loss in killed and wounded at twenty-four officers and one hundred and fifty-five privates; of these, five officers died of their wounds, and thirty-five privates were killed in the field. The loss fell principally on the continental troops; but Colonel Robert of the militia artillery was among the slain.

The return made by General Prevost stated his loss to be somewhat less than that which had been sustained by the assailants.

Three days after this action, the posts at Stono and St. John's were evacuated; and the troops were withdrawn so silently, that their removal entirely escaped the observation of the American parties who watched their lines. The heat now became too excessive for active service. The whole care of the generals was required to save their troops from the fevers of the climate; and the British army having established a post on the island contiguous to Port Royal and St. Helena, retired into Georgia and St. Augustine.

The American militia dispersed, leaving General Lincoln

Lincoln at the head of about eight hundred men. With these he retired to Sheldon, in the neighbourhood of Beaufort, where his primary object was to prepare for the next campaign, which it was supposed would open in October.

The invasion of the southern states wore so serious an aspect, that, notwithstanding the imbecility of the army under the immediate command of General Washington, it was still further weakened for the preservation of that part of the union. Bland's regiment of cavalry, and the remnant of that lately Baylor's, now commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Washington, with the new levies raised in the state of Virginia, were ordered to repair to Charlestown, and place themselves under General Lincoln. The execution of these orders was for a time suspended by the invasion of Virginia.

To interrupt the commerce of the Chesapeak, and to destroy the magazines which had been established on the waters, an expedition had been concerted in the spring, between Sir Henry Clinton and Sir George Collier, the commander in chief of the British naval force on the American station. The land troops assigned to this service amounted to somewhat less than two thousand men, and were commanded by Brigadier-general Mathews. The transports, on board of which they embarked, were convoyed by the admiral in person.

son. On the fifth of May the fleet passed the bar of the Hook, and on the ninth of that month entered the bay of Chesapeak. The next day it anchored in Hampton-road, a large basin of water formed by the confluence of James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth rivers.

To save her militia from being continually harassed by being called into the field on every appearance of predatory parties in her rivers, or on her coasts, Virginia had raised a regiment of artillery for the performance of garrison duty in the state. This regiment had been distributed along the eastern frontier in the manner most conducive to the general safety; and slight fortifications had been erected in the most important situations, for defence against any sudden attacks which might be made by light parties, with a view to plunder rather than to conquest. The small garrisons on the north and south sides of James river could communicate with each other over-land only by a circuitous route; and of consequence, when attacked by an enemy commanding the water, could afford each other no assistance. Independently of this circumstance, the regiment, if united, was not strong enough to maintain any single position against a body of troops so respectable as to contemplate conquest; and the whole face of the lower country of Virginia, intersected with deep creeks, marshes, and rivers, is such as to afford

passes

passes almost every where to those who command the water, by seizing which, they completely envelope troops stationed on the rivers, and cut off their retreat into the broad open country. The forts, therefore, having been constructed exclusively with a view to defence against an attack to be made by shipping, were finished first on the side of the water, and were not rendered tenable against a military force strong enough to act on land. Fort Nelson, one of the most important which had been erected, was on the west side of Elizabeth river; and was garrisoned by about one hundred and fifty regular soldiers, commanded by Major Mathews. It was designed to secure from insult the towns of Norfolk and Portsmouth, which were on each side the river just above it, and the town of Gosport, which lies still higher up, on a point of land intervening between two branches of the river. Norfolk and Portsmouth were places of the most considerable commerce in Virginia. They were the depôts of large supplies for the army; and at Gosport, the state government had established a marine-yard, where ships of war, as well as many other vessels, were building, and naval stores to a great amount had been collected.

The destruction of these stores constituted the principal object of General Mathews; to the attainment of which, the possession of the fort which guarded

guarded them was an essential preliminary. On the morning of the tenth, the fleet entered Elizabeth river; and the boats having the troops on board proceeded up it, under convoy of a galley, to a place called the Glebe, about three miles below the fort, where a landing was made without any opposition. It was intended to storm the works the next day on the land side, where they were incomplete; but the garrison, foreseeing that this attempt would be made, and that it would be equally impracticable to defend the place or to escape if the present moment should be permitted to pass unused, evacuated the fort in the night, and saved themselves in a deep and extensive swamp, called the Dismal, which could not be penetrated without difficulty even by single persons.

The whole bank on the south side of James river being now in possession of General Mathews, he fixed his head quarters at Portsmouth, whence small parties were detached to Norfolk, Gosport, Kempslanding, and Suffolk, where a great quantity of military and naval stores, and several vessels richly laden, were taken, and either brought away or destroyed. The loss sustained both by the public and by individuals was immense. The opposition encountered in effecting it was almost nothing.

The invasion of General Mathews was of short duration. Having destroyed the magazines collected

lected in the small towns near the coast, and the shipping in the rivers, he was directed by Sir Henry Clinton to return to New York, where he arrived towards the end of May.

Impressed with the importance of Portsmouth as a permanent station, the Admiral and General Mathews united in representing to the commander in chief the advantages to be derived from keeping possession of it. But in the opinion of Sir Henry Clinton, the army at that time did not admit of so many subdivisions; and with a view to more interesting objects, Portsmouth was evacuated.

CHAPTER III.

Discontents in a part of the American army—Letter from General Washington on this subject—Colonel Van Schaick surprises and destroys one of the Indian settlements—Expedition, under General Sullivan, against the Indian settlements—Fort Fayette surrendered to the British—Invasion of Connecticut—General Mayne surprises and takes Stonypoint—Expedition, under Colonel Maclean, against Pinolscot—The British post at Dowtes Hook surprised by Major Lee, and the garrison made prisoners.

THE shocking barbarities practised in the course of the preceding year, by Indians, united to white men still more savage than Indians, on the inhabitants of the western frontiers, had irresistibly attracted the public attention, and added motives of mingled resentment and humanity to those of national interest, for employing a larger force than had heretofore been spared for the protection of that part of the union.

General Washington, who in the early part of his life had received many practical lessons in the science of Indian warfare, had been always firmly persuaded of the absolute impossibility of defending the immense frontier on the west from their incursions, by any chain of forts which could be erected; and that the country would be much more

more certainly protected by offensive than by defensive war. His plan was to penetrate by a rapid movement into the heart of their settlements, with a force competent to the destruction of their towns, provided the circumstances of the army would justify his making a detachment sufficient for the purpose. As a contingent part of his plan, he had also contemplated the reduction of the British post at Niagara, the possession of which gave them an almost irresistible influence over the Six Nations. This plan constituted one of the various subjects of conference with the committee of Congress in Philadelphia, and received the entire approbation of that body.

The state governments also took a strong interest in the protection of their western settlements. Connecticut, New-York, and Pennsylvania, respectively applied to Congress, urging the adoption of such vigorous measures as would secure the frontiers against a repetition of the horrors which had been already perpetrated. These papers were referred to the committee appointed to confer with General Washington; in conformity with whose report it was resolved, "That the commander in chief be directed to take efficient measures for the protection of the inhabitants, and chastisement of the savages." Other resolutions were passed at the same time for raising companies of rangers, for the sole purpose of serving on the western frontiers.

That extensive and fertile country lying between the then westernmost settlements of Pennsylvania and New-York, and the great lakes, was occupied by the Six Nations of Indians, who, from their long intercourse with the whites, had made some advances towards acquiring the comforts of civilized life, and had extended their ideas of the advantages of private property beyond those limits which generally bound the views of the savages of North America.

In their populous villages were to be seen several comfortable houses, and their fertile fields and orchards yielded an abundant supply of corn and fruit. Some few of their towns were attached to the United States; but, in general, they were under the influence of the British, from whose posts on the Lakes they received supplies of blankets, rum, and other imported articles. Many of the loyalists, who had been compelled to fly from the settled parts of the United States, had taken refuge among them, and had added to their strength without diminishing their ferocity. These men found an asylum among the Indians, lived with them in their villages, and joined them in their expeditions against the Americans. They had been active in the incursions of the preceding year, and were believed to be meditating others for the ensuing campaign. Into the heart of these villages of mingled whites and Indians, it was now determined

mined to lead a force which should be certainly sufficient to overpower any numbers they could possibly bring into the field, and to destroy the settlements they had made.

The country was to be entered by three divisions at the same time. The principal body, to consist of about three thousand men, was to march up the Susquehannah, and to penetrate immediately into the settlements of the Senecas. The second, to be composed of about one thousand, was to proceed by the way of the Mohawk; and the third, which was to be composed of five hundred men, was to move up the Alleghany river, and attack the towns in that quarter.

The only circumstance which, according to any reasonable calculation, could endanger the success of the expedition, would be the arrival of a strong reinforcement from Canada. To prevent this, means were used to inspire that colony with fears for itself. Demonstrations were made of a design to enter Canada by the way of lake Champlain; and at the same time persons were employed to extend the road from Coos to the Sorel, in order to excite apprehensions from that quarter also. In the mean time, preparations were making for the enterprise really contemplated, and every intelligence was collected which could facilitate its execution.

As the army destined for this expedition was about

about to move, alarming symptoms of discontent were given by a part of it.

The Jersey brigade had been stationed through the winter at Elizabeth-town, for the purpose of covering the adjacent country from the incursions usually made by the British troops quartered on Staten island. Being destined to compose a part of the western army, it was ordered early in May to march by regiments. In answer to this order, a letter was received from General Maxwell, stating that the officers of the first regiment had delivered to their colonel a remonstrance, addressed to the legislature of the state, declaring, that unless their complaints on the subject of pay and support should obtain the immediate attention of that body, they were, at the expiration of three days, to be considered as having resigned; and requesting the legislature, in that event, to appoint other officers to succeed them. They declared, however, their readiness to make every necessary preparation for obeying the marching orders which had been given, and to continue their attention to the regiment until a reasonable time for the appointment of their successors should elapse. "This," added the letter of General Maxwell, "is a step they are extremely unwilling to take, but it is such as I make no doubt they will all take; nothing but necessity—their not being able to support themselves in time to come, and being loaded with debts contracted in the time past—

past—could have induced them to resign at so critical a juncture."

The intelligence conveyed in this letter made a serious impression on the commander in chief. He was strongly attached to the army, and to its interests; had witnessed its virtue, and its sufferings; and lamented sincerely its present distresses. The justice of the complaints made by the officers could not be denied; but the most fatal consequences were to be apprehended from the measure they had adopted. Relying on their patriotism, and on his own influence, he immediately wrote to General Maxwell a letter to be laid before them, in which mingling the sensibility of a friend with the duties of a general, he addressed to their understanding, and to their patriotism, observations calculated to invite their whole attention to the consequences which must result from the step they were about to take. "There is nothing," proceeds the letter, "which has happened in the course of the war that has given me so much pain as the remonstrance you mention from the officers of the first Jersey regiment. I cannot but consider it as a hasty and imprudent step, which on more cool consideration they will themselves condemn. I am very sensible of the inconveniences under which the officers of the army labour, and I hope they do me the justice to believe that my endeavours to procure them relief are incessant. There is more difficulty, however,

however, in satisfying their wishes than perhaps they are aware of. Our resources have been hitherto very limited. The situation of our money is no small embarrassment; for which though there are remedies, they cannot be the work of a moment. Government is not insensible of the merits and sacrifices of the officers, nor, I am persuaded, unwilling to make a compensation; but it is a truth, of which a little observation must convince us, that it is very much straitened in the means. Great allowances ought to be made on this account for any delay and seeming backwardness which may appear. Some of the states, indeed, have done as generously as it is at this juncture in their power; and if others have been less expeditious, it ought to be ascribed to some peculiar cause, which a little time, aided by example, will remove. The patience and perseverance of the army have been, under every disadvantage, such as to do them the highest honour, both at home and abroad; and have inspired me with an unlimited confidence in their virtue, which has consoled me amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune to which our affairs, in a struggle of this nature, were necessarily exposed. Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view, so that we cannot fail without a most shameful desertion of our own interest, any thing like a change of conduct would imply a very unhappy

change of principles, and a forgetfulness as well of what we owe to ourselves, as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this would be the case, even in a single regiment of the army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honour, which I consider as embarked with that of the army at large. But this I believe to be impossible. Any corps that was about to set an example of the kind, would weigh well the consequences; and no officer of common discernment and sensibility would hazard them. If they should stand alone in it, independent of other consequences, what would be their feelings on reflecting that they had held themselves out to the world in a point of light inferior to the rest of the army? Or if their example should be followed, and become general, how could they console themselves for having been the foremost in bringing ruin and disgrace upon their country? They would remember that the army would share a double portion of the general infamy and distress, and that the character of an American officer would become as despicable as it is now glorious.

"I confess the appearances, in the present instance, are disagreeable; but I am convinced they seem to mean more than they really do. The Jersey officers have not been outdone by any others in the qualities either of citizens or soldiers; and I am confident no part of them would seriously intend

intend any thing that would be a stain to their former reputation. The gentlemen cannot be in earnest; they have only reasoned wrong about the means of obtaining a good end; and, on consideration, I hope and flatter myself, they will renounce what must appear improper. At the opening of a campaign, when under marching orders for an important service, their own honour, duty to the public and to themselves, and a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. It will even wound their delicacy coolly to reflect, that they have hazarded a step which has an air of dictating terms to their country, by taking advantage of the necessity of the moment.

" The declaration they have made to the state, at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much that aspect; and the seeming relaxation of continuing until the state can have a reasonable time to provide other officers, will be thought only a superficial veil. I am now to request that you will convey my sentiments to the gentlemen concerned, and endeavour to make them sensible that they are in an error. The service for which the regiment was intended will not admit of delay. It must at all events march on Monday morning, in the first place to this camp, and further directions will be

given when it arrives. I am sure I shall not be mistaken in expecting a prompt and cheerful obedience."

The representations of this letter, though not without influence, did not completely produce the desired effect. The officers did not recede from their claims. In an address to the commander in chief, they declared their unhappiness that any act of theirs should give him pain; but proceeded to justify the step they had taken. Repeated memorials had been presented to their legislature, which had been received with promises of attention, but had been regularly neglected. "At length," said they, "we have lost all confidence in our legislature. Reason and experience forbid that we should have any. Few of us have private fortunes; many have families who already are suffering every thing that can be received from an ungrateful country. Are we then to suffer all the inconveniences, fatigues, and dangers, of a military life, while our wives and our children are perishing for want of common necessaries at home; and that without the most distant prospect of reward, for our pay is now only nominal? We are sensible that your Excellency cannot wish nor desire this from us.

"We are sorry that you should imagine we meant to disobey orders. It was, and still is, our determination to march with our regiment, and to do

do the duty of officers, until the legislature should have a reasonable time to appoint others, but no longer.

"We beg leave to assure your Excellency, that we have the highest sense of your ability and virtues; that executing your orders has ever given us pleasure; that we love the service, and we love our country; but when that country gets so lost to virtue and justice as to forget to support its servants, it then becomes their duty to retire from its service."

This letter of justification was peculiarly embarrassing. To adopt a stern course of proceeding would have hazarded the loss of the Jersey line; an event which would, at the same time, have injured the service, and have greatly wounded the feelings of the commander in chief. To take up the subject without doing too much for the actual circumstances of the army, would seem to be doing too little for the occasion. He therefore declined taking any other notice of the letter than to declare, through General Maxwell, that while they continued to do their duty, in conformity with the determination they had expressed, he should only regret the part they had taken, and should hope they would perceive its impropriety.

The legislature of New Jersey, alarmed at the decisive step taken by the officers, were at length induced to pay some attention to their situation; they

they consenting, on their part, to withdraw their remonstrance. In the mean time, they continued to perform their duty as usual; and their march was not delayed by this unpleasant altercation.

In communicating this transaction to Congress, General Washington took occasion to remind that body of his having frequently urged on them, especially in his late conferences at Philadelphia, the absolute necessity of some general and adequate provision for the officers of the army. "A repetition of them," he said, "would be needless. I shall only observe," continued the letter, "that the distresses in some corps are so great, either where they were not till lately attached to any particular state, or where the state has been less provident, that officers have solicited even to be supplied with the clothing destined for the common soldiery, coarse and unsuitable as it was. I had not power to comply with the request.

"The patience of men animated by a sense of duty and honour will support them to a certain point, beyond which it will not go. I doubt not Congress will be sensible of the danger of an extreme in this respect, and will pardon my anxiety to obviate it."

Before the troops destined for the grand expedition had been put in motion, an enterprise of less extent was undertaken, which was attended with complete success. The settlements of the Onondagas,

Onondagas, one of the nearest hostile tribes of the Six Nations, lying about ninety miles from fort Schuyler, were supposed to be within the reach of a detachment from the garrison of that place. A plan for surprising their towns having been formed by General Schuyler, and approved by the commander in chief, Colonel Van Schaick, assisted by Lieutenant-colonel Willet and Major Cockran, marched from fort Schuyler on the morning of the 19th of April, at the head of between five and six hundred men. Proceeding with great dispatch and secrecy, partly by land and partly by water, Colonel Van Schaick, on the third day of his march, reached the place of his destination.

The utmost address was used in surrounding as many of the settlements as possible at the same time; but the alarm having been given on the first appearance of the Americans, and the towns being of considerable extent,* many of the Indians escaped into the woods. Twelve were killed; and thirty-four, including one white man, were made prisoners. The houses and provisions were consumed by fire, and the horses and other stock were killed. About one hundred guns were broken or otherwise ruined; and the whole settlement was utterly destroyed. Having completely

* About eight miles.

effected

effected the object of the expedition, the detachment returned to fort Schuyler on the sixth day, without having lost a single man. For this handsome display of talents as a partisan officer, the thanks of Congress were voted to Colonel Van Schaick and the officers and soldiers under his command.

The cruelties exercised on the Wyoming and other settlements attacked by the Indians in the course of the preceding campaign, had given a great degree of importance to this expedition; and a deep interest was felt in its success. The commander in chief had bestowed much of his attention on the arrangements necessary to move an army through a wilderness, as well as on the interior of the country which was to be the theatre of their operations; and had spared a considerable portion of the regular force, in order to secure the valuable objects expected from the enterprise. Understanding perfectly the character of the enemy to be encountered, and confident that future quiet depended on the terror excited by present chastisement, his instructions to Sullivan, who commanded the expedition, directed a severity of conduct unusual with General Washington, but which was rendered just by the necessity of resorting to it as a measure of self-defence.

The military strength and situation of the two parties rendered it improbable that any other offensive

fensive operations could be carried on by the Americans in the course of the present campaign.

The British army in New York and the adjacent islands was estimated at nine thousand effective men. To this number was to be added the detachment which had laid waste the lower counties of Virginia under General Mathew, which amounted to two thousand men. The army in Rhode Island was estimated at between five and six thousand. Thus, exclusive of the troops in the southern districts, the army under the command of Sir Henry Clinton was computed at between sixteen and seventeen thousand men. This force was rendered the more efficient by the cooperation of a powerful fleet, and the perfect command of the water; advantages which enabled the general to concentrate it at will, and to direct it against any point where there might be a prospect of attacking to advantage.

The American army was rather inferior to that of the British in real strength. The grand total at all their stations, except in the southern and western country, including officers of every description, amounted to about sixteen thousand. Of these, three thousand were under the command of General Gates in New England; and the remaining thirteen thousand were stationed on both sides the North river, where they had been cantoned during the winter, and where they yet remained

ed for the purpose of covering a rich and extenive scountry which was peculiarly exposed to invasion.

The largest division, amounting to upwards of seven thousand men, affording between five and six thousand effective rank and file, was stationed at Middlebrook, under the immediate command of General Washington. The residue of the army was partly in the Highlands on the Hudson under General M'Dougal, and partly on the east side of that river under General Putnam. The returns of these two divisions exhibited a total of rather less than six thousand.

The bare statement of the numbers on both sides is sufficient to show the entire incompetence of the American army to undertake any plan for dislodging the British from their strong-holds in New York and Rhode Island. Secured by their numbers, by their fortifications, and by their shipping, they exhibited no point which could be considered as vulnerable. On the part of the Americans, therefore, the plan of the campaign was necessarily defensive; and the views of General Washington were limited to securing the important passes up the North river, which have been so often mentioned, and to protecting the country as far as was compatible with that essential object.

The hazards and difficulties attending the execution of the defensive plan which was adopted, were by no means inconsiderable.

Independant

Independant of an extensive and fertile coast, every where accessible to the invading army, the North river, penetrating deep into the country which was to be the theatre of action, gave those who commanded the water great advantages in their military operations. They could proceed up that river, threaten both its shores, and at any time, in a single day, transfer their whole force to either side. On the other hand, General Washington was under the necessity of abandoning the whole extent of country either east or west of the Hudson, and leaving it open to unrestrained depredation; or of dividing his army so as to expose either wing to the collected force of Clinton, while the part attacked could not be rejoined by the troops on the opposite side of the river till these should make an extensive circuit which would necessarily employ several days. This real difficulty was rendered the more embarrassing by the importunities of the several state governments for parts of the continental army to cover their sea-coast, and thus relieve their militia from those repeated tours of duty, which were found equally expensive to the public, and distressing to individuals.

After the destruction of forts Clinton and Montgomery in 1777, the ground on which the fortifications should be erected for the future defence of the North river was changed. The engineers were of opinion, that West Point, lying

rather higher up, and being more completely embosomed in the hills, was a more tenable position; and it had been determined to construct the principal works at that place.

This object had been since prosecuted with unremitting industry, but was far from being completed. The position, however, was naturally very strong, and was thought capable of being rendered impregnable.

Some miles below West Point, about the termination of the Highlands, is King's-ferry; where the great road, affording the most convenient communication between the middle and the eastern states, crosses the North river. The ferry is completely commanded by the two opposite points of land. The one on the west side, which is a rough and elevated piece of ground, is denominated Stony Point; and the other, on the east side, which is a flat neck of land projecting far into the water, is called Verplank's Point.

The command of King's-ferry was an object worth the attention of either army. To the British it gave the advantage of a strong post, which communicated with New York by means of the North river, and enabled them to forage in, and to overawe, a much greater extent of country than they could command while restricted to their present limits. The possession of that post too would greatly incommode the Americans; by compelling them, in all their communications between

the different sides of the river, to take the upper route, which makes a long circuit through a rough and difficult country. Being also the commencement of the Highlands, it was a point from which those important passes, if ever weakly guarded, might be suddenly seized. These considerations rendered the possession of Stony and Verplank's Points a desirable object to both generals; and had induced Washington to extend the plan of fortifying the Highlands, so as to comprehend within them this interesting position.

At Verplank's a small but strong work termed fort Fayette was completed, and was garrisoned by a company under the command of Captain Armstrong. The works on Stony Point, though in considerable forwardness, were unfinished.

The season for military operations in the middle states now approached. The extensive cantonments of the American army, the delay which must unavoidably attend the collection of it to any one point, and the rapidity with which the Hudson enabled Sir Henry Clinton to execute any plan which he might form against the works on its banks, inspired him with the design of opening the campaign with a brilliant *coup de main* up that river; and towards the end of May, preparations were made for the enterprise.

Aware of the importance of receiving prompt and correct intelligence of the situation, move-

ments,

ments, and designs, of his adversary, General Washington had been indefatigable in searching for the means of obtaining it. Under all the difficulties and pecuniary embarrassments with which Congress had been surrounded, a small fund in specie had generally been provided, and submitted to the discretion of the commander in chief. He had been so happy in the employment of the means placed in his hands, and in the selection of characters for the purpose, that he uniformly received early information of every measure taken in New York, indicating movements of any considerable moment.

The preparations which were making by Sir Henry Clinton were immediately communicated to him. He was confident that the British general must either meditate an attack on the forts in the Highlands, or design to take a position between those forts and Middlebrook, in order to interrupt the communication between the different parts of the American army, to prevent their re-union, and to beat them in detail. Measures were instantly taken to counteract either of these designs. The intelligence from New York was communicated to Generals Putnam and M'Dougal; and orders were given to the former, to hold the brigade of continental troops commanded by General Parsons in constant readiness to make a rapid march to the posts in the Highlands, on the first movement of the

the enemy, or on the reception of orders from General M'Dougal. But as the object of the preparations in New York might be the army at Middlebrook, M'Dougal was directed to hold himself in readiness to detach to the aid of that army as many men as could be spared from the defence of his posts. This detachment was eventually to commence its march as soon as Parsons should be near enough to afford with certainty the aid of his brigade. At the same time, preparations were made for moving the army at Middlebrook; and, on the 29th of May, they commenced their march by divisions towards the Highlands. Those first put in motion were directed to keep in view both the objects which the enemy had been suspected of contemplating. The General determined to remain at Middlebrook, till the rear of his army should be enabled to follow the first detachment.

General Mathew, who had probably been ordered from Virginia with a view to this expedition, reached New York just as the troops at that place were getting on board the vessels designed to convey them up the river. Without debarking, the forces under his command were united to those immediately from New York; and on the 30th the whole proceeded towards their point of destination, convoyed by Sir George Collier. Sir Henry Clinton in person conducted the enterprise. The next morning, the largest division of the army,

army, under General Vaughan, landed on the east side of the river, about eight miles below Verplank's; while the remainder, under the immediate command of General Patterson, but accompanied by Sir Henry Clinton, advancing further up, landed on the west side, within three miles of Stony Point.

The works on Stony Point, being incomplete, were immediately abandoned; and an unfinished blockhouse on the extremity of the eminence was set on fire. General Patterson took possession of the ground that afternoon. In the course of the night he dragged some heavy cannon and mortars to the summit of the hill; and by five next morning a battery was ready to open on fort Fayette.

The distance across the river to this fort is about one thousand yards; and the cannonade throughout the day, both from the commanding battery on Stony Point, and from the armed vessels and gun-boats in the river, made a sensible impression on it.

During the following night, two gallies passed the fort, and anchored above it so as to prevent the escape of the garrison by water. At the same time, General Vaughan arrived, after having made a long circuit through the hills, and closely invested it by land, so that no means of saving the garrison remained. Finding it impracticable to hold the place against the immense superiority of force which attacked it on every side, Captain Armstrong was under

under the necessity of surrendering himself and his small garrison prisoners of war.

Immediate directions were given by Sir Henry Clinton for finishing and completing the works at both forts, and for putting Stony Point in particular into a strong state of defence.

It can scarcely be supposed that the views of the British general in moving up the river, were limited to this single acquisition. Although it was of considerable interest, yet the means used were so much greater than were required by the object against which they were directed, as to justify a belief that he contemplated further and more important conquests.

Whatever plans he might have formed, the measures of precaution taken by Washington counteracted the further execution of them; and before Clinton was in a situation to proceed against West Point, General M'Dougall was so strengthened by the arrival of the reinforcements directed to join him from the eastward, that the enterprise became too hazardous to be further prosecuted. The first division of the army from Middlebrook was already in the neighbourhood; and General Washington, who soon followed, took a strong position in Smith's Close, west of the river, which enabled him effectually to cover the fort from any attempt to be made against it on that side. But Sir Henry Clinton was in too great force, and the security of

the passes in the Highlands was an object of too much magnitude, to hazard the maiming of the American army by an attempt to dislodge him. General Washington was therefore under the necessity of acting entirely on the defensive.

On the first intelligence that preparations were making in New York for an expedition which would employ the greater part of the army at that place, Colonel Neilson, a vigilant officer, commanding a small corps at Elizabeth Town, was directed to obtain accurate information respecting the situation of the force on Staten Island. At the same time he was directed to make preparations for attacking that station when it should be weakened, as it probably would be, by drawing off a part of the troops usually encamped there, for the purpose of strengthening the garrison of New York. Colonel Neilson found it impracticable to collect a sufficient force to engage in the enterprise with a prospect of success; and the only benefit derived from the preparations which had been made, was the alarm they excited for the safety of the important posts towards the water, and the consequent application of a part of the British force to their protection. A detachment from the troops which had been engaged in the expedition to the North river, suddenly returned to New York; and it is not improbable that this movement was occasioned by fears for Staten Island.

When

When the fortifications on both sides of King's-ferry were so far completed as to be supposed entirely defensible, Sir Henry Clinton left a strong garrison in each fort, and proceeded down the river to Philips's. The American army continued in the Highlands, guarding the passes through them, and completing the fortifications for the defence of the river.

The relative situation of the hostile armies made it difficult for either to attempt any thing decisive against the other. While the strong ground occupied by the Americans rendered them altogether unassailable, their deficiency in numbers, and in means to carry on the complicated and expensive movements of an active campaign, restrained their general from offensive operations. The hope he was authorized to entertain of a powerful co-operation on the part of France furnished additional motives for attempting nothing which might put his army in hazard. A considerable military and naval force was expected to arrive on the American continent; he deemed it unadvisable therefore to waste an army, which could not be replaced, in enterprises promising no essential advantages, but which might so reduce it as to disable him from availing himself of the expected aid.

This state of things presenting insuperable obstacles to any grand operation, the armies could only be offensively employed on detached expedi-

tions. From its contiguity to New York, and its extent of coast, Connecticut was peculiarly exposed to invasion. The numerous small cruisers which plied in the Sound, to the great annoyance of British commerce, and the large supplies of provisions drawn from the adjacent country for the use of the continental army, were great inducements to the enemy for directing their enterprises particularly against that state. They also hoped to draw General Washington from his impregnable position on the North river into the low country, for the protection of the coast, and thus obtain an opportunity of striking at some part of his army, or of seizing the posts which were the great object of the campaign. With these views an expedition was determined against Connecticut, the command of which was given to Governor Tryon, who was a major-general in the army.

On the third of July, the troops destined for this expedition, amounting to about two thousand six hundred men, embarked at Frog's-neck, on the Sound, and sailing eastward, reached New-haven bay on the 5th, in the morning.

Intelligence of their sailing was immediately transmitted to head-quarters: but the commander in chief was then on the lines, examining in person the condition of the works on Stony and Verplank's Points; in consequence of which, two days elapsed before the communication could be made by

by him to the Governor of Connecticut. The first information, therefore, which that state received of the danger which threatened it, was given by the appearance of the enemy on the coast. The militia assembled with alacrity, and in considerable numbers. But their opposition, though immediate, was insufficient. The British troops effected their landing, took possession of the town, and destroyed whatever naval or military stores could be found. In the afternoon of the next day, they re-embarked, and proceeded westward along the coast, to the village of Fairfield.

Here they experienced rather more opposition than they had encountered at Newhaven. The militia collected in greater numbers, and showed a considerable degree of resolution. But, as they were unequal to the defence of the town, this flourishing village was reduced to ashes; and many unarmed individuals are alleged to have suffered the most brutal treatment. The effectual services of the militia are attested in the apology made by General Tryon for the wanton destruction of private property, which marked and disgraced his conduct at this place. "The village was burnt," he says, "to resent the fire of the rebels from their houses, and to mask our retreat."

The troops being re-embarked at Fairfield, the fleet crossed the Sound to Huntingdon-bay, where it remained till the 11th; when it re-crossed that water,

water, after which the troops were landed in the night, on the Cow-pasture, a peninsula on the east of the bay of Norwalk. About the same time, a much larger detachment from the British army directed its course towards Horse-neck, and made demonstrations of a design to penetrate into the country in that direction.

On the first intelligence that Connecticut was invaded, General Parsons, who was a native of of that state, had been directed by General Washington to hasten to the scene of action, for the purpose of giving confidence to his countrymen, and of guiding their efforts. Placing himself at the head of about one hundred and fifty continental troops, who were supported by considerable bodies of militia, he attacked the British in the morning of the 12th, as soon as they were in motion, and kept up throughout the day an irregular distant fire. But being too weak to prevent the destruction of any particular town on the coast, Norwalk was reduced to ashes; after which, the British re-embarked, and returned to Huntingdon-bay, there to wait for fresh supplies of artillery, and reinforcements of men. At this place, however, orders were received by Governor Tryon, to return with the troops under his command to the White Stone.

Here a conference took place between Sir Henry Clinton and Sir George Collier, in which it was determined

determined to proceed with an increased force against New London.

In contemplation of the enterprise under Tryon, Sir Henry Clinton had ordered a considerable body of troops from Newport.

On receiving intelligence from Gates of their embarkation, General Washington directed Glover's brigade to be immediately put in motion, and to proceed with as much dispatch as possible towards the Hudson. While on the march, orders were given him to join the militia of Connecticut, and assist them in repelling the invaders of that state. General Heath, with his division, was also directed to take a position about Ridgefield, or Bedford, so as to countenance and aid the militia as much as possible. He was, at the same time, to keep in view his communication with the forts, and be in readiness to return to their defence, if the real design of the expedition should be to draw the attention of the American general towards the Sound, and then, by a sudden and rapid movement up the river, to seize the important passes in the Highlands.

But before the continental troops ordered to the relief of Connecticut could afford any real service, employment was found on the Hudson for the whole force under the immediate command of Sir Henry Clinton; and all further operations against that state were relinquished.

The

The importance of the posts at King's-ferry has been already remarked. The inconvenience resulting from their being in possession of the British, furnished strong motives for endeavouring to recover them; but there were others of decisive influence which stimulated the commander in chief to the attempt.

The enterprise, if successful, would have a great effect on the future operations of the campaign, particularly in recalling the troops employed in laying waste the country, and burning the towns on the coast. Nor was it unworthy of regard, that a real necessity seemed to exist, of doing something to satisfy the public expectation, and to reconcile the people to that defensive system which the state of the army rendered unavoidable; and to that apparent inactivity which was imposed on him by the real necessity of his situation.

He used all the means in his power to obtain precise information of the condition of the works, the nature of the ground in their vicinity, the strength and arrangement of the garrison, and the disposition of the guards. To be more certainly master of the subject, he carefully reconnoitred in person the posts he designed to reduce.

On comparing his own observations with the best information he could collect, he was persuaded that an attempt to carry the posts, otherwise than by surprise, could not prudently be made.

In his original plan was comprehended a double attack, to be made at the same time on both sides the river. But the difficulty of a perfect co-operation of different detachments incapable of communicating with each other, and the apprehension that some accident might defeat the enterprise against Stony Point, which was the principal object to be gained, and was believed to lead certainly to the possession of Verplank's, determined him to postpone the less valuable acquisition, and to make that part of the plan dependant on the success of the first. His whole attention, therefore, was turned to the surprise of Stony Point; and the corps destined for this critical service proceeded on it as against a single object.

To General Wayne, who commanded the light infantry of the army, the execution of the plan was entrusted. Secrecy was deemed so much more essential to success than numbers, that it was thought unadvisable to add to the force already on the lines. One brigade was ordered to commence its march, so as to reach the scene of action in time to cover the troops engaged in the attack, in case of any unlooked-for disaster; and Major Lee of the light dragoons, who had been eminently useful in obtaining the intelligence which led to the enterprise, was associated with General Wayne, as far as cavalry could be employed in such a service.

The

The night of the 15th was fixed for the assault; and it being suspected that the garrison would probably be more on their guard towards day-break, twelve was chosen for the hour.

Stony Point is a commanding hill, projecting far into the Hudson, which washes three-fourths of its base. The remaining fourth is in a great measure covered by a deep marsh, commencing near the river on the upper side, and continuing into it below. Over this marsh there is only one crossing-place; but at its junction with the river is a sandy beach, passable at low tide. On the summit of this hill was erected the fort, which was furnished with a sufficient number of heavy pieces of ordnance. Several breast-works and strong batteries were advanced in the front of the principal works; and about half-way down the hill were two rows of abattis. The batteries were calculated to command the beach and the crossing-place of the marsh; and to rake and enfilade any column which might be advancing from either of those points towards the fort. In addition to these defences, several vessels of war were stationed in the river, so as in a considerable degree to command the ground at the foot of the hill.

The fort was garrisoned by about six hundred men, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Johnson.

At noon of the day preceding the attack, the light

light infantry commenced their march from Sandy-beach, distant fourteen miles from Stony Point, and passing through an excessively rugged and mountainous country, arrived about eight in the afternoon at Spring Heels, a mile and a half from the fort, where the dispositions for the assault were made. It was intended to attack the works on the right and left flanks at the same instant. The regiments of Febiger and of Meiggs, with Major Hull's detachment, formed the right column; and Butler's regiment, with two companies under Major Murfree, formed the left. One hundred and fifty volunteers, led by Lieutenant-colonel Fleury and Major Posey, constituted the van of the right; and one hundred volunteers, under Major Stewart, composed the van of the left. At half past eleven the two columns moved on to the charge; the van of each with unloaded muskets and fixed bayonets. They were each preceded by a forlorn-hope of twenty men, the one commanded by Lieutenant Gibbon, and the other by Lieutenant Knox, whose duty it was to remove the abattis and other obstructions, in order to open a passage for the columns which followed close in the rear.

Proper measures having been taken to secure every individual on the route who could give intelligence of their approach, the Americans reached the marsh undiscovered: But, unexpected difficulties

culties having been experienced in surmounting this and other obstructions in the way, the assault did not commence till twenty minutes after twelve. Both columns then rushed forward under a tremendous fire of musketry and grape shot. Surmounting every obstacle, they entered the works at the point of the bayonet, and, without having discharged a single piece, obtained complete possession of the post.

The humanity displayed by the conquerors was not less conspicuous, nor less honourable, than their courage. Not a single individual suffered after resistance had ceased.

All the troops engaged in this perilous service manifested a degree of ardour and impetuosity, which proved them to be capable of the most difficult enterprises; and all distinguished themselves whose situation enabled them to do so. Colonel Fleury was the first to enter the fort and strike the British standard. Major Posey mounted the works almost at the same instant, and was the first to give the watch-word—"The fort's our own." Lieutenants Gibbon and Knox performed the service allotted to them with a degree of intrepidity which could not be surpassed. Out of twenty men who constituted the party of the former, seventeen were killed or wounded.

The loss sustained by the garrison was not considerable. The return made by Licutenant-colonel Johnson

Johnson represented their killed at only twenty, including one captain; and their wounded at six officers, and sixty-eight privates. The return made by General Wayne states their killed at sixty-three, including two officers. This difference may be accounted for by supposing that among those Colonel Johnson stated as missing, there were many killed. The prisoners amounted to five hundred and forty-three, among whom were one lieutenant-colonel, four captains, and twenty subaltern officers. The military stores taken in the fort were also considerable.

The loss sustained by the assailants was by no means proportioned to the apparent danger of the enterprise. The killed and wounded did not exceed one hundred men. General Wayne himself, who marched at the head of Febiger's regiment in the right column, received a slight wound in the head, which stunned him for a time, but did not compel him to leave the column. Being supported by his attendants, he entered the fort with the regiment. Lieutenant-colonel Hay was also among the wounded.

Although the design upon fort Fayette had yielded to the desire of securing the success of the attack on Stony Point, it had not been abandoned.

Two brigades, under the command of General M'Dougall, had been ordered to approach the enemy on the east side of the river, so as to be in readiness

readiness to attempt the works on Verplank's, where Colonel Webster commanded, the instant General Wayne should obtain possession of Stony Point. The impression made by the success on the west side of the river, and the annoyance which might be given fort Fayette from the commanding height on that side, would, it was supposed, greatly favour the attempt to be made on Verplank's. That this detachment might not permit the favourable moment to pass unimproved, Wayne had been requested to direct the messenger, who should bring the intelligence of his success to the commander in chief, to pass through M'Dougall's encampment, and give him the earliest advice of that event. He was also directed to turn the cannon of the fort immediately against Verplank's, and the shipping which lay in the river. The latter orders were executed; and a heavy cannonade was opened on fort Fayette, and on the vessels, which compelled them to change their station, and to fall down the river. Unfortunately, through some misconception never accounted for, the messenger dispatched by Wayne did not call on General M'Dougall, but proceeded directly to headquarters, then at New Windsor. Thus every advantage expected to have been derived from the first impression made by the capture of Stony Point was lost; and the garrison had full leisure to recover from the surprise occasioned by that event,

event, and to prepare for an attack. This change of circumstances rendered it necessary to change the plan of operations. General Howe was directed to take the command of M'Dougall's detachment, to which were to be annexed some pieces of heavy battering artillery, for the purpose of making a breach in the works. Having given the necessary orders, General Washington repaired to Stony Point, whence he might reconnoitre Verplank's, for the purpose of determining on the propriety of prosecuting the enterprise against that place. Being of opinion that it was practicable to carry the works, and to capture the garrison, he ordered Howe to proceed against it; and, after effecting a breach in the walls, to make the proper dispositions for an assault, and to demand a surrender; but, if the garrison should refuse to capitulate, he was not to attempt a storm till it should be dark. To these orders were annexed explicit instructions not to hazard his party by remaining before Verplank's, if the British should cross Croton river in force. In that event, his situation would become dangerous, and he was directed to retire to the Bald-hill, or to the Continental-village.

Through some unaccountable negligence in the persons charged with the execution of these orders, the heavy artillery was not accompanied with suitable ammunition, and the necessary entrench-

ing-

ing-tools were not brought. These omissions were supplied the next day; but it was then too late to proceed against Verplank's.

On receiving intelligence of the loss of Stony Point, and of the danger to which the garrison of fort Fayette was exposed, Sir Henry Clinton relinquished his views on Connecticut, and made a forced march to Dobb's-ferry. Some troops were immediately embarked to pass up the river; and a light corps was pushed forward to the banks of the Croton, for the purpose of overawing the detachment about to attack Colonel Webster.

This movement, by rendering it necessary for General Howe to retire into the Highlands, relieved fort Fayette.

The failure of the attempt to obtain possession of the fort on the east side of the river, in consequence of which that road of communication still remained closed, diminished considerably the advantages which had been expected to result from the enterprise.

On reconnoitring the ground, it was deemed unadvisable to maintain even Stony Point. General Washington was of opinion, and the engineers concurred with him, that the place could not be rendered secure with a garrison of less than fifteen hundred men. His whole effective numbers, exclusive of the garrison necessary to be maintained in West Point, did not exceed nine thousand.

thousand. It would have been absolutely unsafe to have drawn the whole of these out of the Highlands. Still further to weaken his disposable force, by taking from it fifteen hundred men for Stony Point, would disable him so much as absolutely to incapacitate him for further operations.

To these objections against maintaining that post, others were added which deserved attention.

Relying on their ships for security against any attempt by water, the British had left the works towards the river entirely open, and only the land side had been fortified. To render the place tenable by the Americans, it would be as necessary to guard it against attempts by water as by land; to do which, additional works to a considerable extent would be indispensable. These could not be carried on without continuing the whole army in the neighbourhood, which must be attended with great inconvenience. It would suspend the completion of the fortifications at West Point, and expose the army to the hazard of a general action, on disadvantageous ground, with an enemy rendered superior in numbers by the reinforcement from Rhode Island.

Influenced by these considerations, he determined to evacuate Stony Point, and to retire into the Highlands. As soon as this resolution was executed, Sir Henry Clinton repossessed himself of

that post, repaired the fortifications which had been in a great measure destroyed, and placed a stronger garrison in it under the command of Brigadier Stirling. He then resumed his former situation at Philipsburg.

The American army not being in sufficient strength to hazard a general action, and the completion of the works on the North river being the most important object immediately attainable, head-quarters were transferred to West Point, that the commander in chief might bestow the more of his attention on the fortifications at that place. To extend, at the same time, the protection of the army to the coast, as far as was compatible with still more interesting objects, a detachment commanded by General Howe was stationed about Ridgefield, in Connecticut; and Lord Stirling with his division was advanced on the west side of the river to Suffrains, on the borders of New Jersey. These officers were directed to afford all the protection in their power to the inhabitants, but never to lose sight of their communication with the main army. If an opportunity for any handsome partisan stroke should offer, they were at liberty to improve it, but not at the risk of the corps they commanded.

While the two armies watched each other, frequent rencounters took place between small parties, which

which were of no other importance than to evince the intrepidity common to the junior officers who had been formed in the course of the war.

At length Sir Henry Clinton withdrew into York Island, and was understood to be strengthening the fortifications erected for its defence.

This movement was most probably occasioned by an intention to change the theatre of active war. Reinforcements were expected from Europe, but not in sufficient numbers to effect any thing of decisive importance on the North river, so long as Washington should persevere in his plan of occupying the Highlands. The design of forcing him out of this judicious system being abandoned, Sir Henry Clinton prepared to direct his principal efforts against the southern states. To give success to these efforts, it was necessary considerably to strengthen the southern army, which could not be safely done without first improving the fortifications of New York.

This seems to have been the leading motive to the measure; but it was hastened in some degree by the opinion that New York required an immediate additional force for its defence, in consequence of the absence of the fleet, which was about to sail for the relief of Penobscot.

Early in June Colonel M'Lean, with six hundred and fifty men, penetrated from Nova Scotia into the eastern and newly settled parts of Massachus-

setts, and took possession of a very defensible piece of ground in Penobscot, where he commenced such fortifications as indicated an intention permanently to maintain his position.

Alarmed at an invasion which threatened a serious diminution of its territory, the state of Massachussetts determined to dislodge him; and made extraordinary exertions to equip a fleet, and raise an army, for the purpose. A considerable naval armament was prepared, to be commanded by Commodore Saltonstal, on board of which was embarked an army, amounting to between three and four thousand men, under General Lovell. The fleet was commanded by Commodore Saltonstal. With so much celerity had the preparations for this expedition been made, that as early as the 25th of July the whole armament appeared in the Penobscot.

The ground on which M'Lean had commenced his fortifications, was a peninsula on the eastern side of Penobscot, the west point of which ran deep into the river. He had taken the precaution to entrench the isthmus, connecting it with the continent; and the part towards the river, which was in some degree defended by his frigates, and by his batteries, was steep and difficult of access. Along this high bank, piquets were stationed; his principal work being about the centre of the peninsula. After being repulsed in his first attempt,

General

General Lovell at length effected a landing on the western part of the peninsula, where he ascended a precipice of not less than two hundred feet, a part of which was nearly perpendicular; and, with the loss of only fifty men, killed and wounded, drove from the ground the party which defended it. Here a battery was erected, within seven hundred and fifty yards of the main work of the besieged, and a warm cannonade was kept up for several days on both sides.

Perceiving the difficulty of carrying the place either by storm, or by a regular siege, with a militia impatient to return to their homes, General Lovell represented his situation to the government of Massachusetts, who applied to General Gates, then commanding at Providence, for a reinforcement of seven hundred continental troops. This request was readily granted, and Colonel Jackson, with his regiment, was immediately put in motion. In the mean time, an ineffectual cannonade was kept up, and preparations were made to storm the works as soon as he should arrive.

Such was the posture of affairs on the 13th of August, when Lovell received information that Sir George Collier had entered the river with a superior naval force. He immediately re-embarked his whole army. This operation was conducted in the night, and with such silence as to be undiscovered by the garrison, who were in their lines expecting

expecting the assault which the preparations of Lovell had indicated. The American flotilla then drew up in a crescent across the river, as if determined to maintain its position. This shew of resistance was made in the hope of stopping the enemy, till the land forces on board the transports could be conveyed some distance up the river, to a place where they might safely disembark on the western shore. But the British admiral was too confident in his strength to permit this stratagem to succeed; and as he approached, the Americans sought for safety in flight. A general chase, and unresisted destruction, took place. The Warren, a fine new frigate of thirty-two eighteen and twelve-pounders, with five others, carrying from twenty to twenty-four guns each, were blown up. Nine vessels, carrying from twelve to eighteen guns, and four of a still smaller size, experienced the same fate.

The transports, on board of which were the land forces, not being covered by the ships of war, fled in the utmost confusion up the river. Being pursued by the British squadron, the troops landed in a wild uncultivated country, without provisions or other necessaries; and had to explore their way through a pathless desert, for more than a hundred miles, before they could reach a place where supplies were to be obtained. Exhausted with famine and fatigue, they at length gained the settled

parts

parts of the country, after having lost several men, who perished in the woods.

The conduct of the commodore was severely reprobated. Though unequal to the enemy in force, it was supposed that resistance ought to have been made; and, although the loss might have been inevitable, some alleviation would have been found in the reflection, that it was sustained without disgrace.

Sir Henry Clinton still continued encamped just above Haerlem, with his upper posts at King's-bridge; and the American army preserved its station in the Highlands. Strong parties were continually detached down both sides of the river, for the purpose of checking the depredations of the British, and of restraining their intercourse with the disaffected of the country.

In this situation, a bold plan was formed for surprising a British post at Powles-Hook. This service was executed with great address by Major Lee.

After Sir Henry Clinton had replaced the garrison at Stony Point, and had retired down the Hudson, Major Lee was employed on the west side of the river, with directions to observe the situation of the British in that fort, but principally to watch the motions of their main army.

His parties often scoured the country as low as the new bridge on the Hackensack. In these excursions

sions he obtained intelligence respecting the conduct of a corps stationed at Powles-Hook, which suggested to him the idea of surprising and carrying off the garrison.

Powles-Hook is on the west side of the Hudson, immediately opposite the town of New York. It is a point of land penetrating deep into the river, narrowing at the neck which connects it with the continent as well as at the other extreme, and widening about midway. On the point nearest New York, a fort, three blockhouses, and some redoubts, had been constructed, in which was placed a garrison of between four and five hundred men.

A deep ditch, into which the water of the river flowed, having over it a draw-bridge connected with a barred gate, had been cut across the isthmus, so as to make the Hook in reality an island. This ditch could only be passed at low water. Thirty paces within it was a row of abattis running into the river; and some distance in front of it, is a creek fordable only in two places.

This difficulty of access, added to the remoteness of the nearest corps of the continental army, impressed the garrison with the opinion that they were perfectly secure; and this opinion produced an unmilitary remissness of conduct in the commanding officer.

On receiving Lee's communications, General Washington

Washington was inclined to favour the enterprise they suggested; but he withheld his full assent to it until he could be satisfied that the assailants would be able to make good their retreat. In this the principal difficulty consisted.

The Hackensack, which communicates with the waters of the Hudson below New York, runs almost parallel with that river quite to its source, and is separated from it only a few miles. This neck is still further narrowed by a deep creek which divides it, and empties itself into the Hackensack below fort Lee. West of that river, runs the Passaick, which unites with it near Newark, and forms another long and narrow neck of land. From Powles-Hook to the new bridge, the first place where the Hackensack could be crossed without boats, the distance is fourteen miles; and from the North river to the road leading from the one place to the other, there are three points of interception, the nearest of which is less than two miles, and the furthest not more than three. The British were encamped in full force along the North river, opposite to these points of interception. The retreat would, of consequence, be attended with great danger, and, if made through this narrow slip of land, could only be secured by its celerity. To diminish this danger, it was intended to occupy the roads leading through the mountains of the Hudson to the Hackensack with a select

lect body of troops, for the purpose of impeding the advance of any detachment which might be ordered to intercept the party in its return.

Every preparatory arrangement having been made, the night of the 18th of August was fixed on for the enterprise. A detachment from the division of Lord Stirling, including three hundred men designed for the expedition, was ordered down as a foraging party. The American troops having frequently foraged in the same tract of country, this movement excited no suspicions. Lord Stirling followed with five hundred men, and posted himself at the new bridge, so as to afford his assistance should it be necessary.

At the head of three hundred men, Major Lee took the road through the mountains which run parallel with the North river; and, having secured all the passes into York Island, reached the creek which surrounds the Hook between two and three in the morning.

Here he halted, and detached a chosen officer with a few picked men to proceed under cover of the night to the ditch, in order to discover from the appearance of the garrison, whether notice of his approach had been received.

Every thing within the Hook exhibiting the appearance of negligent security, Lee passed first the creek, and then the ditch, undiscovered. About three in the morning, after a feeble resistance, he entered

entered the main work; and, with the loss of only two killed and three wounded, made a hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, including two or three officers. Very few of the British were killed. Major Sutherland, who commanded the garrison, threw himself, with forty or fifty Hessians, into a strong redoubt, which it was thought unadvisable to attack, because the time employed in carrying it might endanger the retreat. The guns fired in New York, and from the ships lying in the harbour, proved that the alarm was completely given. Major Lee determined not to hazard his party, and the advantage already gained, by attacking works which he had reason to suppose would be defended. Wasting no time in destroying what could easily be replaced, he with the utmost expedition brought off his prisoners and his detachment.

To avoid the danger of a retreat up the narrow neck of land which has been already described, some boats had been brought from Pluckimin to Newark the preceding evening, from which place they were carried in the night to Dow's-ferry on the Hackensack, not far from Powles Hook. There they were guarded by a trusty officer of Lee's corps, who was directed to remain with them till the arrival of the troops engaged in the expedition. This, it was understood, would happen before day, as it had been designed to make the attack at midnight; but in the morning, no intelligence having arrived

arrived from Major Lee, the officer guarding the boats was led to believe that the attack had been postponed. The danger of his situation, and the fear that his being discovered would disclose the object, and prevent its execution on a subsequent night, induced him to retire with the boats to Newark. The head of the retreating column soon afterwards reached the ferry, where they had the mortification to perceive that the boats were gone. Fatigued as they were, no alternative remained but to pass as rapidly as possible up the narrow neck of land between the two rivers, to the new bridge. A horseman was dispatched with this information to Lord Stirling, and the line of march was immediately taken up.

About nine in the preceding evening, Major Buskirk had been detached up the North river with a considerable part of the garrison of Powles Hook, and some other troops, for the purpose of falling in with the American party supposed to be foraging about the English neighbourhood.

On receiving intelligence of the disappointment respecting the boats, Lord Stirling took the precaution immediately to detach Colonel Ball, with two hundred fresh men, to meet Lee, and cover his retreat. Just after he had passed Ball, Buskirk entered the main road, and fired on his rear. Taking it for granted, as was indeed very probable, that this was only the advanced corps of a much

a much larger body which had been detached to intercept the party retreating from Powles Hook, Ball made a circuit to avoid the enemy; and Buskirk, finding a detachment he had not expected, took the same measure to secure his own retreat. The two parties, narrowly missing each other, returned to their respective points of departure.

This critical enterprise reflected much honour on the talents of the partisan with whom it originated, and by whom it was conducted. General Washington announced it to the army in his orders with much approbation; and Congress bestowed upon it a degree of applause more adapted to the merit and talent displayed in performing the service, than to its magnitude.*

A few days after the surprise of Powles Hook, the long-expected fleet from Europe, under the command of Admiral Arbuthnot, having on board a reinforcement for the British army, arrived at New York.

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* Sir Henry Clinton, in his official account of this affair, remarks, that the retreat of the Americans was as precipitate and disgraceful, as the attack had been spirited and well conducted. Sir Henry seems to have entirely lost sight of the nature and object of the expedition. It was never designed to retain the post, but to surprise and carry off the garrison. That celerity which he terms precipitation was indispensable to success, and adds to the reputation of the officer he censures. The orders of General Washington too on this point were peremptory.

This

This reinforcement, however, did not enable the British general to enter immediately on that active course of offensive operations which had been meditated. It was soon followed by the Count D'Estaing, who arrived on the southern coast of America with a powerful fleet; after which Sir Henry Clinton deemed it necessary to turn all his attention to his own security.

Previous to the receipt of this information, Lord Cornwallis had embarked with a considerable detachment for Georgia and South Carolina, but he returned in a few days; soon after which, Rhode Island, and the posts up the North river, were evacuated, and the whole army collected in New York, the fortifications of which were carried on with unremitting industry.

CHAPTER IV.

Saint Lucia taken by the British; Saint Vincent's and Grenada by the French—Count D'Estaing with his fleet arrives on the southern coast of America—Siege of Savannah by the combined armies—Unsuccessful attempt to storm it—The siege raised—Victory gained by General Sullivan over the Indians at Newtown—Spain offers her mediation to the belligerent powers—War between Spain and England—Letter from General Washington to Congress—The American army go into winter quarters.

THE Count D'Estaing and Admiral Byron, having sailed about the same time from the continent of North America, met in the West Indies, where the war was carried on with vigour, and with various success. St. Lucia surrendered to the British, in compensation for which the French took St. Vincent's and Grenada. About the time of the capture of the latter island, such large reinforcements were received by D'Estaing as to give him a decided naval superiority; after which, a battle was fought between the two hostile fleets, in which the count claimed the victory, and in which so many of the British ships were disabled, as to compel the admiral to retire into port in order to refit, while his adversary remained in a condition to keep the sea.

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The earnest representations made on the part of the United States, of the great advantages which would result to the allied arms from a powerful fleet employed on their coast, had prevailed on the cabinet of Versailles to instruct the Count D'Estaing to afford all the aid in his power to the Americans, whenever a fair occasion for doing so should present itself.

The present moment seemed a fit one for paying obedience to these orders. The British fleet had retired into port to repair the damage sustained in the late action; and letters received from General Lincoln, from the executive of South Carolina, and from the French consul at Charlestown, urged him strongly to pay a visit to the southern states; and represented the situation of the British in Georgia to be such, that the destruction of the army in that quarter, and the recovery of the state, would be almost certainly achieved, as soon as he should appear.

Yielding to these solicitations, the count sailed with twenty-two ships of the line and eleven frigates, having on board about six thousand land forces from Cape François, to which place he had retired after the naval engagement near Grenada; and arrived so suddenly on the southern coast of America, that the Experiment of fifty guns, and three British frigates, fell into his hands. A vessel was dispatched to Charlestown with information

tion of his arrival; on the receipt of which, General Lincoln concerted a plan for the siege of Savannah with Major-general Viscount de Fontanges, who had been dispatched to him by the French admiral, and with the executive of South Carolina.

It was agreed that on the 11th of September D'Estaing should land three thousand men at Beaulieu; and that on the same day Lincoln should cross the Savannah with a thousand Americans, and effect a junction with him. To facilitate the landing of the French troops, a number of small vessels were sent round from Charlestown, and the militia were ordered to assemble for the purpose of aiding these military operations, from which the liberation of the whole southern country was confidently expected. The town of Savannah was at that time the head-quarters of General Prevost, who still commanded in the southern districts. Apprehending no immediate danger, he had weakened the garrison by the establishment of several distant outposts in Georgia, and by leaving Colonel Maitland with a strong detachment in the island of Port Royal in South Carolina.

On the first appearance of the French fleet, expresses were dispatched to Colonel Maitland, and to all the outposts, directing the troops to repair without loss of time to Savannah. These orders were promptly obeyed: and on the 10th of September

tember the several detachments in Georgia had all arrived in safety, except the sick and convalescents of the garrison of Sunbury; who, being unable to march, were embarked on board an armed vessel, in which they were detained by contrary winds till they were intercepted.

On the 11th, General Lincoln reached Zubly's-ferry, and threw over a part of his troops; but he found much greater difficulty in crossing the river than had been apprehended. The adjoining marsh is three miles over, and several deep creeks pass through it. The bridges over them had been broken down by General Prevost; and, to increase the embarrassment, a sufficient number of boats could not be procured. These circumstances unavoidably produced such delay, that the troops and baggage had not entirely passed the river till the evening of the 13th, when they encamped on the heights of Ebenezer, twenty-three miles from the town of Savannah, where they were joined by General M'Intosh with the corps which had been stationed at Augusta. On the 15th, Lincoln was assured that the French had disembarked in force, and the next day a junction between the two armies was formed before the town of Savannah.

The French fleet had passed Osiban bar on the 12th, and on the following night had landed about three thousand men at Beaulieu. On the 15th they were joined by Pulaski with his legion; after which

which some skirmishing took place in front of the British lines; and the next day, before the arrival of General Lincoln, the Count D'Estaing sent in a summons, requiring the garrison to surrender to the arms of the King of France.

From the first appearance of the French fleet, General Prevost had been most assiduously employed in preparing for a vigorous defence. He seems, however, to have been desirous of gaining time, and therefore answered the summons in such a manner as to encourage the opinion that he designed to capitulate. He invited the Count D'Estaing to propose terms, if he had any to offer; and on its being observed in reply, that it was the province of the besieged to propose such terms as they might desire, he requested a suspension of hostilities for twenty-four hours, which was granted him. In the course of that critical and important interval Colonel Maitland arrived from Beaufort, with the detachment which had been stationed at that place.

As the French vessels were in possession of the main channel by which the Savannah communicates with the sea, Colonel Maitland reached the town by a route which had not been deemed practicable. He came round by Dawfuskie, an island north of the mouth of the river, and landing in a deep marsh, drew his boats through it into the Savannah, above the place where the ships lay at

anchor, and thence made his way by small parties into the town.

On receiving this reinforcement, it was determined in a council to defend the place to the last extremity; and the next day this resolution was communicated to D'Estaing.

After reconnoitring the works, it was thought unadvisable to attempt them by storm. The two generals concurred in the resolution, that the effect of artillery should first be tried upon them; and several days were employed in bringing up the heavy ordnance and stores from the fleet.

On the 23d the besieging army broke ground, and by the 1st of October had pushed their sap within three hundred yards of the abattis on the left of the British works. Several batteries, containing thirty-three pieces of heavy cannon, and nine mortars, had also opened on the besieged, and for several days had played almost incessantly upon them. At the same time a battery of sixteen guns was opened from the water; but this cannonade made no impression on the works.

The situation of D'Estaing was becoming very critical. More time had already been consumed on the coast of Georgia, than he had originally supposed would be necessary for accomplishing the total destruction of the British force in the state. He became uneasy for the possessions of France in the West Indies, which, during his absence, were left

left in a considerable degree unguarded; nor was he without apprehensions for the safety of the ships under his command. The naval officers remonstrated strenuously against longer exposing so valuable a fleet, on an insecure coast, at a tempestuous season of the year. The danger that a British squadron, refitted and reinforced so as to become equal or superior in point of strength, might overtake them, broken and scattered by a storm, was urged with a degree of persevering earnestness which the Count found himself incapable of resisting.

In a few days the lines of the besiegers might have been carried by regular approaches into the works of the besieged, which would have rendered the capture of the town and garrison inevitable. But D'Estaing declared, that he could devote no more time to this object, and it only remained to raise the siege, or to attempt to carry the works by storm. The latter part of the alternative was adopted.

On the left of the allied army was a swampy hollow-way, which afforded a cover for troops advancing on the right flank of the besieged, to a point not exceeding the distance of fifty yards from their principal works. Along this hollow, it was determined to proceed to the main attack, while feints should be directed against other parts of their lines.

Before

Before day, on the morning of the 9th of October, a heavy cannonade and bombardment was commenced from all the batteries, and the flower of the French and American troops were drawn out. About three thousand five hundred of the former, and one thousand of the latter, of whom between six and seven hundred were continental soldiers, and the residue militia of Charlestown, constituted the body which was to make the real attack, while the militia of the country were to divide the attention of the besieged by feints in other quarters.

The combined forces advanced in three columns, led by D'Estaing and Lincoln,* aided by the principal officers of both nations, and made a furious charge on the British lines. Their reception was warmer than had been expected. The besieged were entirely prepared for the attack; their lines were completely manned; and their works had been skilfully constructed. The fire from their batteries reached every part of the columns of the assailants which had emerged from the swamp, and did great execution. Yet the attacking troops advanced with ardour, pressed through the abattis, crossed the ditch, and mounted the parapet. Both the French and Americans planted their standards

* Lieutenant-colonel Laurens commanded the light troops which preceded the American column.

on the walls, and were slaughtered in great numbers while endeavouring to force their way into the works. For about fifty minutes the contest was extremely obstinate. At length, warmly opposed in front by an enemy fighting under cover, and severely galled in their flanks by artillery incessantly pouring on them, the columns of the assailants began to relax, and something like a pause was manifested in the assault. While penetrating the works at the head of about two hundred horse, in order to charge in the rear, Count Pulasky received a mortal wound, and his cavalry was broken.

In this critical moment, Major Glaziers, at the head of a body of grenadiers and marines, rushing suddenly from the lines, threw himself furiously on those who had made their way into the redoubts, and drove them over the ditch and abattis into the hollow and swamp through which they had marched to the attack. It being apparent that further perseverance could produce no advantage, a retreat was ordered.

In this unsuccessful attempt, the loss of the French in killed and wounded was about seven hundred men. Among the latter were the Count D'Estaing himself, Major-general de Fontanges, and several other officers of distinction.

The continental troops lost two hundred and thirty-four men; and the Charlestown militia, who,

who, though united with them in danger, were more fortunate, had one captain killed, and six privates wounded.

The loss of the garrison was astonishingly small. In killed and wounded it amounted only to fifty-five. So great were the advantages of the cover afforded by their works.

After this repulse, all hope of success was lost; and the Count D'Estaing notified to General Lincoln his determination immediately to raise the siege. The remonstrances of that officer were without effect. The motives which had induced the assault were decisive against a further continuance of the French armament in Georgia; and the removal of the heavy ordnance and stores was commenced. This being effected, both armies moved from their ground on the evening of the 18th of October. The Americans, recrossing the Savannah at Zubly's-ferry, again took post in South Carolina. The French, having marched only two miles the evening on which the siege was raised, remained the next day on their ground, in order to cover General Lincoln from the pursuit of the garrison; after which, their re-embarkation was effected. A violent gale immediately came on, which dispersed the whole fleet; and, though the count had directed seven sail to repair to Hampton Road in Virginia, the Marquis of Vaudreuil was the only officer who was able to execute the order.

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The issue of this enterprise, on which such towering hopes had been erected, was the source of severe chagrin and mortification to the southern states. Such, however, was the prudence and temper of General Lincoln, that no discontent at raising the siege was displayed by the American officers, and the armies separated with manifestations of reciprocal esteem.

The precise strength of the garrison is not known, but it has been estimated at something less than three thousand men. The defence was certainly made with resolution and military talent, and much credit is due to those who conducted it. The expectations which had brought the militia into the field being disappointed, they dispersed; and the affairs of the southern states wore a more gloomy aspect than at any former period.

On receiving from Lincoln intelligence of his situation, Congress passed a resolution, requesting General Washington to order the North Carolina troops, and such others as could be spared from the northern army, to the aid of that in the south; and assuring the states of South Carolina and Georgia of the attention of government to their preservation; but requesting those states, for their own defence, to comply with the recommendations formerly made respecting the completion of their continental regiments, and the government of their militia while in actual service.

It has been already stated, that great preparations were made for the expedition led by General Sullivan against the white and Indian savages on the western frontier; and that the bloody tragedies acted in the campaigns of 1778 in that country, had determined the commander in chief to employ a large portion of the continental army on that interesting service.

The largest division of the western army was to assemble at Wyoming, on the main branch of the Susquehannah. General Sullivan commenced his march in time to reach that place in the month of June; and hopes had been entertained that he would be in a condition immediately to proceed on the enterprise. But a considerable proportion of the provisions laid up for the expedition were spoiled; and so much time was required to repair this loss, and to obtain larger supplies of ammunition and other military stores which he deemed necessary, that it was the end of July* before he could move from the place of rendezvous.

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* While Sullivan was preparing to invade their country, the savages were not inactive. At the head of a small party of whites and Indians, Joseph Brandt, late in July, fell upon the frontiers of New York, murdered several of the inhabitants, carried others into captivity, and burned and destroyed several houses. He was pursued by about one hundred and fifty militia, whom he drew into an ambuscade, and entirely defeated. A few days afterwards, Captain M'Donald, at the head

Another body of troops, designed to compose a part of the western army, had passed the winter on the Mohawk, and early in the season had marched under the command of General Clinton to Lake Otsego, whence they were to proceed down the western branch of the Susquehannah, and, at the confluence of its two principal branches, to effect a junction with Sullivan, who was to move up the main river. On the 22d of August these two divisions united; and the whole army, which with its attendants amounted to five thousand men, marched up the Cayuga, or western branch of the Susquehannah, which led into the heart of the Indian country.

It was impracticable to make such extensive and tedious preparations, without giving full notice of the expedition which was meditated. The plan of operations contemplated by Sullivan seems to have been completely understood; and, notwithstanding the superiority of his force, the Indians boldly determined to defend their country. Having resolved to risk a general action for its pre-

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head of another small party, of whom a third were British, took a small fort on the west branch of the Susquehannah, and made the garrison, amounting to about thirty men, prisoners of war. The women and children, contrary to the usages of Indians, were permitted to retire into the settled country.—*Gordon.*

servation,

servation, the ground they selected for the conflict seems not to have been ill chosen. About a mile in front of Newtown, which is some miles above Chemung, they collected their whole force, consisting, as General Sullivan supposed, of fifteen hundred men, but, according to their own estimation, of only eight hundred. They were commanded by the two Butlers, Guy Johnson, M'Donald, and Brandt; and five companies of whites, calculated at two hundred men, were united with them. They had constructed a breastwork about half a mile in length, on a piece of rising ground. The right flank of this work was covered by the river; which, bending to the right, and winding round the rear, exposed only their front and left to an attack. On the left was a high ridge, nearly parallel to the general course of the river, terminating somewhat below the breastwork; and still further to the left was another ridge running in the same direction, and leading to the rear of the American army.

The ground they occupied was covered with pine, interspersed with low shrub oaks, many of which, for the purpose of concealing their works, had been cut up and stuck in front of them, in such a manner as to exhibit the appearance of being still growing. The road, after crossing a deep brook at the foot of the hill, turned to the right, and ran nearly parallel to the breastwork, within

within rifle-shot of it, so as to expose the whole flank of the army to their fire, if it should advance without discovering their position.

Parties communicating with each other by sentinels, were stationed on each of the hills on their left, so as to fall on the right flank and rear of Sullivan when the action should commence.

About eleven in the morning of the 29th of August, this work was discovered by Major Par, who commanded a rifle corps which constituted the advance guard of the army. General Hand immediately formed the light infantry in a wood, distant about four hundred yards from the enemy, and stood upon his ground till the main body should arrive. In the mean time, a continual skirmishing was kept up between the rifle corps and small parties of the Indians, who sallied from their works, and suddenly retreated, apparently with the hope of being incautiously pursued.

Conjecturing that the hills on his right were occupied by the savages, and that they designed from them to annoy his flank and rear as soon as he should be engaged in front, Sullivan immediately ordered General Poor, supported by General Clinton, to take possession of that which led into his rear, and thence to turn the left, and gain the rear of the breastwork, while Hand and Maxwell with the artillery should attack in front. These orders were promptly executed. The artillery opened just as Poor reached the foot of the hill.

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He immediately pushed up the mountain, and a sharp conflict commenced, which was sustained for some time with considerable spirit on both sides. Poor continued to advance rapidly, pressing the enemy before him with fixed bayonets, and occasionally firing on them.

They retreated from tree to tree, keeping up an irregular fire, till he gained the summit of the hill. Perceiving that their flank was completely uncovered, and that they were in danger of being surrounded, the savages immediately abandoned their breastwork, and, crossing the river, fled with the utmost precipitation. An unavailing pursuit was kept up for a few miles.

This victory, which was complete in its effect, cost the Americans in killed and wounded about thirty men. The loss fell chiefly on Poor's brigade. The ascertained loss of the Indians was inconsiderable. Only eleven dead bodies were found on the field; but they were so intimidated by the total failure of this first attempt to defend their habitations, and by the apparent strength of the invading army, that every idea of further resistance was abandoned. As Sullivan advanced, they continued to retreat before him without harassing his main body, or even skirmishing with his detachments, except in a single instance.*

* Lieutenant Boyd, who had been detached to a considerable distance in order to reconnoitre the Genessee town, fell into

He penetrated into the heart of their country, which his parties scoured, and laid waste in every direction. Every lake, river, and creek, in the country of the Five Nations, was traced for villages; and no vestige of human industry was permitted to remain. Houses, corn-fields, gardens, and fruit-trees, shared one common fate; and Sullivan strictly executed the severe but necessary orders he had received, to render the country completely uninhabitable for the present, and thus, by want of food, to compel the hostile Indians to remove to a greater distance.

Eighteen villages, a number of detached buildings, one hundred and sixty thousand bushels of corn, and all those fruits and vegetables which conduce to the comfort and subsistence of men, were utterly destroyed. Five weeks were unremittingly employed in this work of devastation. The objects of the expedition being accomplished, Sullivan returned to Easton in Pennsylvania, having lost only forty men by sickness and the enemy. The want of a sufficient supply of provisions, and the impossibility of finding in the country through which his march must have been directed, food enough for the subsistence of his army, alone prevented his endeavouring to render the campaign

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into an ambuscade laid for him by a large body of the enemy, and fell with fourteen men, and an Oneida chief.

completely

completely decisive, by making an attempt on the British post at Niagara.

The devastation of the country has been spoken of with some degree of disapprobation. This disapprobation appears to be the result rather of a general disposition in the human mind to condemn whatever may have the appearance of tending to aggravate the miseries of war, than of reflection. There were circumstances which reconciled to humanity this seeming departure from it. Holding the commanding posts on the lakes, and at all times ready to afford the Indians an abundant supply of those European commodities which had become necessaries, the English possessed a controuling influence over them, which kept them in almost continual war with the United States. The cruelties which they were in the habit of practising on their enemies, seemed to have received an additional degree of ferocity from the virulent malignity of the whites who had taken refuge among them, and who sought occasions to retaliate tenfold on their countrymen the injuries they supposed themselves to have sustained. There was real foundation for the opinion that an annual repetition of the horrors of Wyoming could only be prevented by disabling the enemy from perpetrating them. And no means in the power of the United States to use, promised so certainly to effect this desirable object, as the removal of neighbours,

bours, whose hostility could only be diminished by terror, and whose resentments were only to be assuaged by fear.

While Sullivan laid waste the whole country on the Susquehannah, another expedition under Colonel Broadhead was carried on from Pittsburgh, up the Alleghany, against the Mingos, Munseys, and Senaka tribes. At the head of between six and seven hundred men, he advanced two hundred miles up that river, and destroyed the villages and corn-fields on its head branches. Here, too, the Indians were totally unable to resist the force with which they were invaded. After essaying one unsuccessful skirmish, they abandoned their villages to a destruction from which it was not in their power to defend them, and sought for personal safety in their woods.

On receiving the communication of General Sullivan, Congress passed a vote of approbation on his conduct, and on that of his army: that approbation, however, seems not to have extended beyond his operations in the Indian country. His demands for military stores for the expedition had been so high; in his conversations with his officers, he had so freely censured the civil government for having failed to comply with all those demands; in general orders, he had so openly complained of inattention to the preparations necessary to ensure success to the enterprise; that

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considerable offence was given to several members of Congress, and still more to the board of war. In consequence of these causes, when, at the close of the campaign, Sullivan complained of ill health, and offered on that account to resign his commission, the endeavours of his friends to obtain a vote requesting him to continue in the service, and permitting him to withdraw from actual duty till his health should be restored, was over-ruled, and his resignation was accepted. The resolution permitting him to resign was, however, accompanied with one thanking him for his past services.

Although the great exertions made in the course of this campaign to terminate the Indian war, did not produce all the benefits expected from them, and did not afford complete security to the western frontiers, they were certainly attended with considerable advantages. The Indians, though not subdued, were intimidated. They became less terrible, and their incursions were less formidable, as well as less frequent.

The summer of 1779 passed away without furnishing in America any circumstance which could be supposed to have a material influence on the issue of the war. In Europe, however, an event took place which had been long anxiously looked for, and from which the most sanguine expectations were formed. Spain at length determined to unite with France, and to make a common cause

cause with her against Great-Britain. It was believed that these two powers would be able to obtain a complete ascendancy at sea, and that their combined fleets would maintain a superiority on the American coast as well as in Europe.

From the first determination of France to take part in the war, it appears to have been the earnest wish of the cabinet of Versailles to engage Spain likewise in the contest. That power, however, was drawn into it slowly and reluctantly.

Her resentments against England; her solicitude to diminish the naval strength of that nation, whose superiority at sea had excited the jealousy of every commercial state in Europe; and her wish to recover Gibraltar, Jamaica, and the Floridas; urged her to seize the fair occasion now offered of dismembering the British empire. But her dread of the effect which the independence of the United States might produce in her own colonies, mingled, perhaps, with some apprehensions of danger from the contest she was about to provoke, produced an appearance of irresolution, and rendered it for a time uncertain what course she would ultimately take.

In this conflict of opposite interests, the influence of the cabinet of Versailles, and the jealousy of the naval power of Britain, obtained the victory; and his Catholic Majesty appears to have determined to prevent the reannexation of the

United States of America to their mother country, but to effect this object by negotiation rather than by the sword.

In pursuance of this pacific system, the mediation of Spain was offered to the belligerent powers. This proposition was readily accepted by France; but the minister of his Britannic Majesty evaded any explicit arrangements on the subject, while he continued to make general and verbal declarations of the willingness of his sovereign to terminate the present war, and to give peace to Europe, under the mediation of the Catholic King. In consequence of these declarations, a general truce for a term of years was suggested by the Spanish minister, who also proposed, that in the mean time a congress of deputies from the belligerent powers should assemble at Madrid, to adjust the terms of a permanent treaty. Into this congress deputies from the United States were to be admitted, and to be treated with as the representatives of a sovereign nation. Although an explicit acknowledgment of their independence was not to be required, it was to be understood that they should be independent in fact, and should be completely separated from the British empire.

This negotiation was protracted to a considerable length; and, in the mean time, all the address of the cabinet of London was used to detach either France or the United States from their alliance with

with each other. In the manifestoes afterwards published, that court was charged by his Catholic Majesty with having insidiously endeavoured, under the semblance of submitting to the mediation of Spain, to negotiate a separate peace with France, which would leave England at liberty to pursue her designs on America; and with having also endeavoured to effect an accommodation with the United States, for the purpose of turning their combined arms against the house of Bourbon.

While this negotiation was depending, notice of it was given to the American government, by the minister of France at Philadelphia, as well as by Mr. Arthur Lee, one of their agents in Europe; and Congress was repeatedly urged by the former, to furnish those who might be authorized to represent them in the conferences for a general treaty, with ample powers and instructions to conclude it. On this subject an extraordinary degree of solicitude was manifested to hasten the full powers, and to moderate the claims of the United States. They were assured that France would never separate her interests from theirs, and would consider their cause as her own; but they were reminded, that the allies, not having been victorious, could not dictate the terms of the treaty, and that to prolong their deliberations on peace was to reject it. Their delays, it was repeated to them, would encourage the suspicions entertained, and the reports circulated

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in Europe, concerning a division of sentiments and of views in Congress; and might fortify the hope the enemy continued to entertain of fomenting those domestic divisions, and of exciting distrust between the allies, by affecting to treat separately with each of them.

The representations of the French minister were not confined to a demand that Congress should agree on the instructions to be given to their plenipotentiaries. He also urged, that their powers should be ample; that the terms should not be such as to defeat the negotiation; and that the persons employed should have the confidence and friendship of the allied courts of France and Spain. He frequently suggested the policy of adopting such a system of measures as would satisfy Spain, and bring her into the alliance, that being absolutely necessary to secure it against any unforeseen events.

It seems to have been the policy of the cabinet of Versailles to exclude the United States from a share of the fisheries, and to limit them on the west by a line not extending further than the settlements then made. Either from an apprehension that the war might be really protracted, should the United States insist on an acknowledgment of their independence as a preliminary to any treaty, or from an opinion that such preliminary acknowledgment would leave the terms of the treaty less under

under the control of France, and the American plenipotentiaries more masters of their own conduct, Monsieur Girard laboured to persuade Congress to recede from that demand. If they could be independent in fact, he thought the form not worth contending for.

The great difficulty, he said, of bringing monarchs to a measure so wounding to their pride as to pronounce the humiliating formula, had been exemplified in the cases of Holland, Genoa, and the Swiss Cantons. It was only obtained for Holland, *tacitly*, after a war of thirty years, and *expressly*, after an interval of seventy.

To this day, Genoa, and the Swiss Cantons, have never been recognized, nor acknowledged tacitly, or formally, as independent states, by their former sovereign: but they enjoy their sovereignty and independence only under the guaranty of France. His court thought it not improbable that difficulties of this nature, which rest merely in words, might delay or prevent America from enjoying the thing itself. He therefore continued to urge the impolicy of instructing their plenipotentiaries to insist on a formal acknowledgment of their independence.

While Congress was employed in debating the instructions to be given their ministers, the negotiation between Spain and England was brought to a close. As the former became prepared for hostilities,

hostilities, the offered mediatiou was pressed in such a manner as to make it necessary either to accept or to reject it. This drew from the British cabinet a declaration, that the acknowledgment of the independence of the United States, even modified according to the proposition of Spain, was inadmissible. His Catholic Majesty immediately determined to take part in the war, and ordered the Marquis D'Almadovar, his minister in London, to deliver in a rescript to Lord Weymouth, one of the principal secretaries of state, in which he recited the complaints of Spain against England, and declared his determination to use all the means with which the Almighty had entrusted him, to obtain that justice which he had solicited so many ways without being able to acquire it.

Having delivered this paper, the marquis left the kingdom without taking leave; upon which, letters of reprisal against the vessels and subjects of the crown of Spain were immediately issued. On the part of Spain, a powerful fleet, which had been preparing during the negotiation, was fitted out to co-operate with that of France. Yet the United States were not acknowledged as sovereign and independent, nor was their minister accredited. Dispatches notifying the hostilities meditated by his Catholic Majesty, were forwarded to Don Galvez, the Spanish governor of Louisiana, who collected a considerable military force at New Orleans,

leans, composed partly of Americans, and reduced the settlements held by the British crown on the Mississippi, which had not been apprised of the war.

Intelligence of this important event was given to Congress, while that body was yet deliberating on the instructions to their negotiators. It is not improbable that this information had some influence on those deliberations; and, rendering them less solicitous about the future conduct of Spain, diminished the motives for making territorial sacrifices to that power, for the purpose of engaging it in the war.

The consideration of this interesting subject was entered upon early in February, and it was not till the middle of August that the instructions were prepared. In the most essential points, the advice and opinions of the minister of France were overruled. Their commissioners were ordered to make it a preliminary article to any negotiation, that Great Britain should agree to treat with the United States as sovereign, free, and independent; and that their independence should be effectually assured and confirmed by the terms of the treaty itself.

On the subject of boundaries, the instructions given by Congress did not essentially vary from the treaty afterwards actually negotiated; except that, instead of limiting themselves on the north

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by the St. Laurence, they claimed to extend that line to lake Mississing; and insisted that, after leaving that lake, it should be drawn in no instance further south than the forty-fifth degree of north latitude. A surrender of an equal right to fish on the great bank, in common with other powers, was also positively forbidden; and the minister of the United States at Paris was directed to endeavour to effect an alteration in the treaty of alliance with his Most Christian Majesty, so as explicitly to declare it a *casus fœderis* between them, if either party should be disturbed in the free use of the fisheries, and war in consequence thereof should break out with Great Britain. In all other respects, the American negotiators were to govern themselves by the principles of the alliance with France, by the advice of their ally, by their knowledge of the interests of their country, and by their own discretion.

That the United States might be in a situation to avail themselves, without further delays, of any occasions which should be presented for terminating the war, Mr. John Adams, who was already in Europe, was authorized to negotiate a treaty of peace, and a commercial treaty, with Great Britain; and Mr. Jay, at that time president of Congress, was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the court of Madrid. In his endeavours to negotiate

tiate a treaty with his Catholic Majesty, he was instructed to adhere to the claim of a free navigation of the Mississippi.

This claim was objected to by the cabinet of Madrid, and was discountenanced by that of Versailles. After the instructions for Mr. Jay had been drawn up, and he had sailed for Europe, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, then the minister of France at Philadelphia, in conference with a committee of Congress, stated the earnest wish of his Most Christian Majesty to effect an alliance between the United States and Spain; and that, in order to make the way more easy to such an alliance, he had commanded his minister to communicate to Congress his ideas respecting some articles which his Catholic Majesty deemed of great importance to the interests of his crown, and on which it was his desire that the United States should express themselves with precision, and with such moderation as might consist with their essential rights.

These articles he said were,

1. A precise and invariable boundary to the United States.

2. The exclusive navigation of the river Mississippi.

3. The possession of the Floridas.

4. The lands on the left or east side of the river Mississippi.

On

On the first point, he said, it was the idea of the cabinet of Madrid, that the United States should extend westwardly no further than settlements were permitted by the royal proclamation of 1763.

On the second, that the United States do not consider themselves as having any right to navigate the river Mississippi, no territory belonging to them being situate thereon.

On the third, that it is probable the king of Spain will conquer the Floridas during the present war; and, in such event, every cause of dispute relative thereto between Spain and the United States ought to be removed.

On the fourth, that the lands lying on the east side of the Mississippi, the settlement of which was prohibited by the aforesaid proclamation, are possessions of the crown of Great Britain, and proper objects against which the arms of Spain may be employed, for the purpose of making a permanent conquest for the Spanish crown: that such conquest may probably be made during the present war: that therefore it would be advisable to restrain the southern states from making any settlements or conquests in that territory.*

* The state of Virginia had already opened a land-office for the sale of that part of the territory claimed by France for Spain which now constitutes the state of Kentucky, and a considerable portion of the western parts of Virginia.

That

That the court of Madrid considered the United States as having no claim to those territories, either as not having had possession of them before the present war, or not having any foundation for a claim in the rights of the sovereign of Great Britain, whose dominion they had abjured.

That his Most Christian Majesty, united to the Catholic King by blood, and by the strictest alliance, and united to these States in a treaty of alliance, and feeling towards them dispositions of the most perfect friendship, was extremely desirous of cementing between his Most Catholic Majesty and the United States the most happy and lasting friendship. That the United States might repose the utmost confidence in his good-will to their interests, and in the justice and liberality of his Catholic Majesty: and that he cannot deem the revolution which had set up the independence of the United States past all danger of unfavourable events, until his Catholic Majesty and the United States shall be established on those terms of confidence and amity which are the objects of his Most Christian Majesty's very earnest wishes.

A majority of Congress could not at this time be prevailed on to change their resolutions, either with respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, or the territory they claimed on the eastern side of that river.

As the campaign drew towards a close, without affording

affording any solid foundation for the hope which had been fondly cherished in America, that the war also was about to terminate, General Washington repeated those efforts which he had so often and so successfully made, to urge the civil authorities to prepare in time for the ensuing year. He submitted to the view of his government a detailed report of the whole army, which exhibited the alarming fact, that between October 1779, when the report was dated, and the end of June of the succeeding year, the terms of service of nearly one-half of the men under his command would expire.

Among the inconveniences attending the complex system of government then prevailing in the United States, it was not the least considerable, that measures essential to the safety of the nation, which might have been adopted early as well as late, were never taken in time to afford the benefits which ought to have been derived from them. Thus, when the period for raising the quotas of the respective states by voluntary enlistments had passed away, and the necessity of resorting to coersive measures had become absolute, those measures were so delayed, and so irregularly put in execution, that the terms of service of different portions of the army expired almost every month in the year, and raw troops, unacquainted with the first rudiments of military duty, were introduced

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in the most critical moments of a campaign. No greater expence would have been incurred, nor would the constraint on individuals have been greater, while the public service would have been infinitely promoted by it, if timely and correspondent measures had been taken by all the states to raise their respective quotas by a specified time in the depth of winter. This arrangement would at the same time have afforded to the recruits the advantage of being trained a few months before they were brought into actual service, and have given to the general a certain uninterrupted force for each campaign. This course of proceeding had been continually recommended, and the recommendation had been as continually neglected.

"In the more early stages of the contest," said the commander in chief to Congress, in a letter of the 18th of November, "when men might have been enlisted for the war, no man, as my whole conduct and the uniform tenor of my letters will evince, was ever more opposed to short enlistments than I was; and while there remained a prospect of obtaining recruits upon a permanent footing in the first instance, as far as duty and a regard to my station would permit, I urged my sentiments in favour of it. But the prospect of keeping up an army by voluntary enlistments being changed, or at least standing on too precarious and uncertain a footing to depend on, for the exigency of our

our affairs, I took the liberty in February 1778, in a particular manner, to lay before the committee of arrangement, then with the army at Valley Forge, a plan for an annual draught, as the surest and most certain, if not the only means left us, of maintaining the army on a proper and respectable ground. And, more and more confirmed in the propriety of this opinion by the intervention of a variety of circumstances unnecessary to detail, I again took the freedom of urging the plan to the committee of conference in January last; and, having reviewed it in every point of light, and found it right, or at least the best that has occurred to me, I hope I shall be excused by Congress in offering it to them, and in time for carrying it into execution for the next year, if they should conceive it necessary for the states to complete their quotas of troops.

"The plan I would propose is, that each state be informed by Congress annually of the *real deficiency* of its troops, and called upon to make it up, or such less specific number as Congress may think proper, by a draught; that the men draughted join the army by the first of January, and serve till the first of January in the succeeding year. That, from the time the draughts join the army, the officers of the states from which they come be authorized and directed to use their endeavours to enlist them for the war, under the bounties granted

granted to the officers themselves, and to the recruits by the act of the 23d of January last, viz. ten dollars to the officer for each recruit, and two hundred to the recruits themselves. That all state, county, and town bounties to draughts, if practicable, be entirely abolished, on account of the uneasiness and disorders they create among the soldiery, the desertions they produce, and for other reasons which will readily occur. That, on or before the first of October annually, an abstract or return, similar to the present one, be transmitted to Congress, to enable them to make their requisitions to each state with certainty and precision. This I would propose as a general plan to be pursued; and I am persuaded that this, or one nearly similar to it, will be found the best now in our power, as it will be attended with the least expence to the public, will place the service on the footing of order and certainty, and will be the only one that can advance the general interest to any great extent."

These remonstrances on the part of the commander in chief were not attended with more success than those which had before been made. Although the best dispositions existed, the proceedings of Congress were unavoidably slow, and the difficulty of bringing about a harmony and concert of measures among thirteen sovereign states was too great to be surmounted. The resolutions

respecting the military establishment were not agreed to till the 9th of February, and did not require that the men should be furnished before the 1st of April.

In consequence of these incurable defects in the system itself, the contributions of men made by the states continued to be irregular, uncertain, and out of season: and the army could never acquire that consistency and stability which would have resulted from an exact observance of the plan so often recommended.

On receiving information of the disaster experienced by the allied arms before Savannah, and the consequent resolution to abandon the siege of that place, Sir Henry Clinton, who by the arrival of the reinforcement from Europe, and the evacuation of Rhode Island, was in great force in New York, resumed his plan of active operations against the southern states. A large embarkation took place soon after that event had been announced to him; but, as it would have been imprudent to hazard the voyage till certain information should be received that D'Estaing was no longer on the American coast, the armament did not leave the Hook till near the end of December. The detachment destined for the south was led by Sir Henry Clinton in person; and the fleet by which it was escorted was conducted by Admiral Arbuthnot. The defence of New York and its dependencies

pendencies devolved upon the German General Knyphausen.

The first preparations made in New York for some distant enterprise, were communicated by his faithful intelligencers to General Washington, who conjectured that the expedition contemplated must be particularly against Charlestown in South Carolina, and generally against the southern states. His utmost endeavours, therefore, were used to hasten the march of the troops of North Carolina, of the new levies of Virginia, and the rear division of Bland's and Baylor's regiments of cavalry, which were designed to reinforce General Lincoln. On finding the situation of the southern army to be more unfavourable than had been supposed, he also obtained permission from Congress to detach the Virginia line to its aid.

The season for active operations in a northern climate being over, the attention of the general was turned to the distribution of his troops in winter quarters. Habit had familiarised the American army to the use of huts constructed by themselves, and both officers and men were content to pass the winter season in a hutted camp. In disposing of the troops therefore, until the time for action should again arrive, villages in which they might be comfortably accommodated were not sought for. But wood and water, a healthy situation, convenience for supplies of provisions, sta-

tions which would enable them as much as possible to cover the country, and to defend particular positions, were the objects taken into consideration, and were all to be consulted. At the same time, it was desirable to station the main army so as to prevent its being insulted in its quarters.

With a view to these various circumstances, the army was thrown into two grand divisions. The northern division was to be commanded by General Heath, and its principal object was the security of West Point, and of the posts on the North river as low as King's-ferry. Subordinate to this, was the protection of the country on the sound, and down the Hudson to the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge.

The other and principal division of the army was to remain under the immediate command of General Washington. The station originally designed for it was the heights in rear of the Scotch plains in Jersey: but, on viewing the country, and its resources in wood and water, a position in the neighbourhood of Morris-town was chosen, to which the army was conducted, and where it was put under cover late in December. Detachments from this post were made towards the North river and Staten island, for the purpose of covering the country, and of securing it against the depredations of the enemy.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

Sir Henry Clinton invests Charlestown—Colonel Washington defeats Tarleton—Opinion of General Washington on the subject of defending Charlestown—Tarleton surprises and defeats an American corps at Monk's Corner—The Garrison of Fort Moultrie surrender themselves prisoners of war—Colonel White defeated by Tarleton—General Lincoln capitulates—Burford defeated—Sir Henry Clinton takes measures for settling the government of South Carolina and Georgia—General Gates appointed to the command of the southern army; is defeated by Lord Cornwallis near Camden—Baron de Kaeb killed—Success of General Sumpter; his defeat.

THE departure of the French fleet from the continent immediately following the unsuccessful assault on Savannah, produced a sudden and a gloomy change in the prospects of the southern states. The sanguine hopes which had been entertained of the recovery of Georgia, and of the total destruction of the British power in that quarter, gave place to the most melancholy apprehensions for South Carolina. Nor were these apprehensions ill founded.

The continental troops under the command of General

General Lincoln did not amount to more than one thousand men fit for duty; and the prospect of considerable reinforcements was by no means flattering.

The facility with which General Prevost had passed through the state, and the assurances he had received of the indisposition of a large proportion of the people to defend themselves against an army capable of effective operations, disclosed too certainly the true situation of the country, not to convince all discerning men, that a real attempt at conquest would be made the ensuing year.

General Lincoln was not blind to the danger which was approaching: but he perceived without being able to provide against it. His power as a military commander was too limited, and his influence with the civil authority of the state too weak, to draw forth in time for its protection even the means it possessed.

From the situation of the country, the preservation of its metropolis was of infinite importance to the state. Yet no preparations were making to put it in a condition to stand a siege. Fort Moultrie, which had been so gallantly defended in 1776, and which was considered as the key to the harbour, was entirely out of repair, and Fort Johnson on James's island had fallen into ruins. The works across the neck, which were commenced when Charlestown was threatened by General Prevost, were left unfinished; and towards the water, no other

other defences had been constructed than those immediately on the bay. Should an attempt be made to transport a body of troops in flat boats, from James's island into the town, nothing could be easier than to elude the batteries. These circumstances had been strongly represented to the governor by General Lincoln; but, from some defect in the existing law, the executive found it impracticable to collect a sufficient number of blacks, the only labourers to be depended upon in that sultry climate for these essential purposes.

On retiring from the siege of Savannah, the Virginia dragoons and infantry were detached to Augusta: the troops of South Carolina were stationed partly at Sheldon opposite Port Royal ferry, between thirty and forty miles north of Savannah, and partly in Fort Moultrie; and those of North Carolina remained with General Lincoln in Charlestown.

In this situation he waited events, in the hope of reinforcements from the north, and of the adoption of more vigorous defensive measures by the legislature of the state than had hitherto been taken.

Admiral Arbuthnot, who has been already stated to have sailed from Sandy Hook on the 26th of December 1779, arrived at Savannah on the 31st of the following month. One of the transports which had been separated from his fleet in a storm, was brought into Charlestown harbour on the 23d of January

January 1780; and, from the prisoners, the first certain intelligence was received, that the expedition from New York was destined against the capital of South Carolina. On receiving this intelligence, General Lincoln re-assembled his regular troops in the neighbourhood of Charlestown.

Sir Henry Clinton remained at Savannah till his ships which had been scattered in the storm, could be collected, and repaired, so as again to put to sea. Before the middle of February he entered the haabour or inlet of North Edisto, about thirty miles south of Charlestown, and, without any opposition, effected a landing on St. John's island. A part of the fleet was sent round to blockade the harbour, while the army proceeded slowly and cautiously from Stone creek to Wappoocut, and through the islands of St. John and St. James.

General Lincoln received a reinforcement of between three and four hundred Virginia regulars, who had marched from Petersburg under the command of Colonel Heath, and of some new levies and militia from North Carolina. His force however was still so incompetent to the defence of the place, and the works around it were so incomplete, that had Sir Henry Clinton been in a condition to march against it, immediately after effecting his landing, the town must necessarily have fallen into his hands. But the injuries and losses sustained during the voyage from New York to Savannah, had

had unfitted him for immediate operations, and he seems to have determined to commit nothing to hazard. He dispatched a frigate for further aid from New York, and ordered General Prevost to reinforce him with eleven hundred men from Savannah. In the mean time he continued his advances, making depots at proper stations, and securing his communications with them and with the sea, across Wappoocut to the main land, on which he extended his posts to Ashley river.

This delay, in the event so fatal, but then deemed so propitious to the American arms, was employed to the utmost advantage in improving the defences of Charlestown. The legislature on its meeting had enabled the executive to employ slaves to work on the fortifications; and, alarmed at the formidable army with which their country was invaded, had passed an act "delegating to Governor Rutledge, and such of his council as he could conveniently consult, a power to do every thing necessary for the public good, except taking away the life of a citizen without a legal trial."

Under these acts, about six hundred slaves were immediately employed on the works, and vigorous though not very successful measures were taken by the executive to assemble the militia of the country.

The fallacious hope was entertained, that if the fortifications could be so improved as to render the town

town defensible before the siege should commence, the garrison would be made sufficiently strong by the reinforcements expected from the north, and by the militia of the state, to maintain the place, and compel Sir Henry Clinton to raise the siege.

It was determined in council that the American army was too weak to hazard a diminution of it by any serious opposition to the progress of the British through the country. The cavalry, with a small corps of light troops, were directed to hover on their left flank; and the other troops, consisting of about fourteen hundred regulars fit for duty, aided by the militia, were drawn into the town, and employed in unremitting labour on the works.

Although the horses of the British cavalry had been entirely lost on the passage from New York, Sir Henry Clinton soon obtained others, with which he remounted his dragoons, and formed a light corps under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, which completely covered his left flank, and was very active in dispersing the militia who were assembling in the neighbourhood. In one of these excursions, his cavalry fell in with and engaged Lieutenant-colonel Washington, who commanded the remnant of Baylor's regiment. Tarleton was driven back with loss; but the want of infantry disabled Washington from pursuing the advantage he had obtained.

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In carrying on the siege of Charlestown, the command of the harbour is at all times of infinite importance. Without that advantage, it requires a very large army completely to invest the place, and to preserve a communication with the sea. Aware of this circumstance, Congress had ordered four continental frigates to South Carolina. These, with the marine force belonging to the state, and two French vessels of war, carrying the one twenty-six, and the other eighteen guns, constituted a respectable fleet under the command of Commodore Whipple, with which it was intended to dispute the entrance into the harbour.

General Lincoln was the more sanguine respecting the issue of this conflict, because it was understood that the bar was impassable by a ship of the line, and that even a large frigate could not be brought over it without first taking out her guns, or careening her so much that the crew would be unable to work her.

On sounding within the bar, it was for the first time discovered that the water was too shallow for the continental frigates to act with any effect; that they could not approach nearer than Five-fathom Hole; that the channel was too narrow for them to form the line of battle; and that, in making the attempt, they would be very much exposed to the fire from the batteries erected by the assailants on the land. Under these circumstances,

stances, the officers of the navy were unanimously of opinion that no successful opposition could be made at the bar, and that the operations of the fleet would be more useful in concert with the fort on Sullivan's island.

The intention of disputing the passage over the bar being abandoned, Commodore Whipple moored his squadron in a line with Fort Moultrie, in a narrow passage between Sullivan's island and the middle ground. Some attempts were made to obstruct the channel, so as to stop the fleet when attempting to pass the fort; and it was hoped that at this place an effectual opposition might be made.

The British ships which were designed to force a passage into the harbour had lain a considerable time without their guns, waiting for a favourable wind to make the attempt. At length the circumstances of wind and tide concurring, the ships, among which was a sixty-four, were brought over the bar without opposition or accident, and anchored in Five-fathom Hole.

The obstructions attempted in the channel had been found ineffectual, and it was believed to be absolutely impossible to prevent the British fleet from passing Fort Moultrie. This effected, it would be in their power to take such stations in Cooper river, as would enable them to rake the batteries on the shore, and entirely to close the communication between the town and country.

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The consequences of such a complete investment were too serious to the garrison, as well as to the town, to be hazarded while they could be avoided; and, therefore, the plan of defence was once more entirely changed. It was determined to carry the armed vessels into the mouth of Cooper river, and there sink them, with some merchantmen having *chevaux de frize* fitted on their decks, in a line from the town to Shute's Folly, so as to stop any vessel which might attempt to enter that river. The guns were landed and placed in the batteries, where they were to be manned by the sailors taken from the vessels.

This seems to have been the critical moment for evacuating the town. The loss of the harbour rendered the defence of the place, if not absolutely desperate, at least so improbable, that the hope to preserve it could not have been rationally entertained by a person who was not deceived by the expectation of much more considerable aids than were actually received.

When this state of things was communicated to General Washington by Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, he thus addressed him in reply: "The impracticability of defending the bar, I fear, amounts to the loss of the town and garrison. At this distance it is impossible to judge for you. I have the greatest confidence in General Lincoln's prudence; but

but it really appears to me, that the propriety of attempting to defend the town depended on the probability of defending the bar; and that when this ceased, the attempt ought to have been relinquished. In this, however, I suspend a definitive judgment, and wish you to consider what I say as confidential." Unfortunately this letter did not arrive in time for the sentiments of the commander in chief to have that influence on the conduct of the besieged, to which they were so justly entitled.

In a letter of justification addressed to General Washington by Lincoln, after he had been permitted to visit his friends, he attributes his continuing in Charlestown, after losing the harbour, to a confidence not then abandoned, that the succours promised by the Carolinas and Virginia would arrive, and would enable him still to keep open the communication on the north-east of Cooper river. Unfortunately, this hope was not relinquished, but was kept up by the promises which originally produced it, till it became impracticable to embrace those measures which would have been adopted in time, but for a reliance on fallacious assurances, with which those who made them could not comply. The regular troops marching to his assistance, had been represented at upwards of three thousand men, though they did not exceed half that number; and

and the states of North and South Carolina gave assurances of aiding him with four or five thousand militia.

Sir Henry Clinton had now reached Ashley river. He was in perfect possession of the various inlets and water communications south of the town, which he completely commanded, as well by his batteries, as by his gallies which had been introduced into them. The van of his army crossed Ashley river in three divisions, a mile above the ferry, and about ten miles above the town. Having brought over his artillery and military stores, he moved down the neck, and on the night of the first of April broke ground within eight hundred yards of the American lines.

The defences of Charlestown had been constructed under the direction of a Mr. Laumoy, a French gentleman of reputation in the American service; and, although not calculated to resist a regular siege, were by no means contemptible.

They consisted of a chain of redoubts, lines, and batteries, extending from one river to the other. In the front of each flank, the works were covered by swamps, originating from the opposite rivers, and tending towards the centre, through which they were connected by a canal passing from one to the other. Between these outward impediments and the works, were two strong rows of abattis; the trees being buried slanting in the earth, so that their heads facing outwards, formed a kind

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of fraized work against the assailants; and these were further secured by a ditch double picketed, between which and the lines deep holes were dug at short intervals to break the columns of the assailants, should a storm be attempted. In the centre, where the natural defences were unequal to those on the flanks, a horn-work of masonry had been constructed, as well to remedy that defect, as to cover the principal gate; and this, during the siege, had been closed in such a manner, as to render it a kind of citadel or independent fort.* These were the fortifications across the neck. Towards the water equal attention and industry had been used, and works were thrown up at every practicable landing-place.

While the besiegers were yet employed on their first parallel, the garrison received a considerable reinforcement. General Woodford, who had been detached from the camp at Morristown in December, entered the town with the old continental troops of the Virginia line, now reduced to about seven hundred effectives. General Hogan with the North Carolina line had arrived before him. The whole garrison consisted of somewhat more than two thousand regular troops, of about one thousand North Carolina militia, and of the citi-

* Ann. Reg.

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zens of Charlestown. The governor had exerted himself to the utmost to bring in the militia of the state of South Carolina. In pursuance of the powers vested in him by the legislature, he had issued a proclamation, ordering all those who were draughted for the service, and all those who resided, or held property in the city, to repair immediately to its defence, under penalty of confiscation. This severe measure did not produce the benefits expected from it. Not more than two hundred of the country militia could be brought into town.

By the 9th of April, Sir Henry Clinton completed his first parallel, extending across the neck, and mounted his guns in battery. His works formed an oblique line from six to eleven hundred yards distant from those of the besieged. About the same time, a favourable occasion having presented itself, Admiral Arbuthnot passed Sullivan's island, under a heavy and well-directed fire from fort Moultrie, then commanded by Colonel Pinckney; and in about two hours, with the loss of only twenty-seven seamen killed and wounded, anchored under James's island, near fort Johnston, just out of gun-shot of the batteries of the town. The fore-topmast of one of the frigates was shot away, and the ships in general sustained considerable damage in their masts and rigging. One of the transports grounded within gun-shot of the

fort, and was so much damaged as to be abandoned and set on fire by her crew. The fort sustained no injury from the fire of the shipping.

Being now in complete possession of the harbour, and having stationed vessels off the different inlets, the British commanders by sea and land sent a joint summons to General Lincoln, demanding the surrender of the town. To this summons Lincoln returned a firm and modest answer. "Sixty days," said he, "have passed since it has been known that your intentions against this town were hostile, in which time has been afforded to abandon it, but duty and inclination point to the propriety of supporting it to the last extremity."

On receiving this answer the besiegers opened their batteries, but seemed to place their principal reliance on proceeding by sap quite into the American lines.

About this time it was determined that the governor, with half the members of his council, should go out of town, in order to exercise the authority and powers of the executive government in the state, while the other half of the council, with the lieutenant-governor, remained in town for the same purpose. The hope was entertained, that the influence of the governor would be sufficient to collect a considerable force in the rear and on the left flank of the besieging army.

Hitherto

Hitherto Sir Henry Clinton had not extended his lines north of Charlestown neck, and the communication of the garrison with the country on the north-east side of Cooper river had remained perfectly open. The American cavalry, under the command of General Huger, had passed that river, and were stationed in the neighbourhood of Monk's corner, about thirty miles above Charlestown. The duty assigned them was to keep open that part of the country, to restrain the British foraging parties, and to cover supplies coming in to the relief of the town. As an additional security to this communication, the preservation of which could alone enable the garrison to receive supplies of men and provisions, or to retreat when the town should be no longer tenable, posts of militia were established: one between the Cooper and Santee rivers, to which the governor repaired in person; and another at a ferry on the Santee, where boats were directed to be collected for the purpose of facilitating the passage of the American army over that river. The hopes, however, which had been entertained of giving strength to these posts, were miserably disappointed.

This object was deemed so important, that, after General Woodford had entered the town, Lincoln, notwithstanding the weakness of the garrison, determined to make a detachment from his regular troops, to throw up some works on Wandoo, the eastern

branch of Cooper, about nine miles above the town, and on Lampriere's Point. Although it was found impracticable to bring the militia into Charlestown, it was expected that they might be prevailed on to assemble at these posts, the maintaining of which was essential to a communication with the country.

After the fleet had entered the harbour, and thereby rendered unnecessary the chain of forts which had been kept up before that event, Sir Henry Clinton turned his attention to the country on the east side of Cooper; without the possession of which, or the introduction of his vessels into the mouth of that river, the place could not be completely invested, nor the retreat of the garrison entirely cut off. To effect this interesting object, it was deemed necessary to disable the American cavalry, by a sudden and decisive blow. Lieutenant-colonel Webster was employed on this service. Before day, on the morning of the 14th he detached Tarleton with the horse and a corps of infantry, to beat up the quarters of the American cavalry at Monk's-corner.

This party is said to have been conducted by a negro slave in the night, through secret and unfrequented paths, until it reached the American videttes, who were stationed about a mile from their encampment. The alarm was then given; but Tarleton pressed on with such rapidity, that, bearing down the slight resistance which could be made

made by the advanced guard, he broke in upon the Americans; and, although the precaution of keeping their horses bridled and saddled had been taken, he commenced the attack on the main body before they could mount and place themselves in a condition to make resistance.

About thirty of the cavalry were killed or taken, and the remainder entirely dispersed. They saved themselves in a swamp, and some days intervened before they could be re-assembled.

This decisive blow opened to Lieutenant-colonel Webster the whole country between Cooper and Wandoo. He took possession of the passes; and established a post near the head of the last-mentioned river, of two hundred and fifty horse, and six hundred infantry. General Lincoln immediately called a council to deliberate on the propriety of attacking this post. The garrison was declared to be too weak to admit of the absence of a number sufficient to perform this service; and thus, the only route by which a retreat could be effected was left in the hands of the besiegers.

The second parallel was now commenced, and it became every day more apparent that the town must ultimately yield to the regular approaches which Sir Henry Clinton persisted to make. An evacuation was proposed, and the opinion of Lincoln seems to have been in favour of that measure; but the remonstrances of the principal inhabitants, who

who intreated him not to abandon them to the fury of a disappointed enemy, added to the great difficulties which must attend such an attempt, especially when disapproved by the civil authority, deterred him from adopting the only course which afforded even a probability, by saving his army, of saving the southern states. These difficulties consisted in the necessity of making forced marches in the face of a greatly superior army, for a considerable distance, through a country already occupied in part by the enemy, across large rivers, without cannon, horses, or baggage of any kind. Though great, they were perhaps not insurmountable; but they continued to encrease.

Soon after the affair at Monk's-corner, a reinforcement of about three thousand men was received from New York. This addition to his strength enabled Sir Henry Clinton to make very large detachments to the aid of Lieutenant-colonel Webster, and the importance of the station induced Lord Cornwallis to take the command on that side of Cooper river.

In consequence of this change of situation, another council of war was called on the 20th, to deliberate on the critical state of affairs, and to determine what course the public safety required the army to pursue. Notwithstanding the multiplied difficulties attending an evacuation of Charlestown, General Lincoln appears to have been still inclined

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to the measure. But a number of fortunate circumstances must have concurred to render a retreat possible; and the attempt was effectually prevented by the opposition it experienced from the civil authority, which seems to have been impressed with the opinion, that the escape of the garrison would have been followed by the total destruction of the town, and the ruin of its inhabitants.

The council advised that a capitulation should be proposed; and that the place should be delivered up on condition that the garrison should be at liberty still to bear arms, and that the inhabitants should be secured in their persons and property. These propositions were made, and without hesitation rejected; upon which hostilities re-commenced.

The besiegers had completed their second parallel, and had begun the works of the third, when Colonel Henderson made a vigorous sally on their right, which was attended with some success. That this was the only sortie made during the whole siege, is to be attributed to the weakness of the garrison. General Lincoln deemed it necessary to reserve all his strength to man his lines, in the event of an assault, or to force a retreat should he determine to evacuate the city.

In this state of things, General du Portuib, who had been directed to join the southern army, and to assist in the defence of Charlestown, was conducted

ducted by secret ways through the woods into the town. This gentleman was believed to possess considerable military knowledge, and great skill in his particular department. He at once perceived the impossibility of defending the place, and repeated the proposition for attempting a retreat. This proposition was, however, again rejected, and it now only remained to protract the surrender as long as possible, in the vain hope that some fortunate occurrence might bring relief.

Every day diminished this hope, and added to the difficulties of the besieged. The admiral armed some vessels taken by Lord Cornwallis on Wandoo; and with a body of five hundred sailors and marines took possession of Mount Pleasant, which induced an immediate evacuation of Lampriere's Point. The small fort on Wandoo was also evacuated; but in attempting to make their way into the town, the greater part of the troops which had occupied it fell into the hands of the enemy.

From Mount Pleasant, an immediate communication was opened with Sullivan's island, and it was perceived that the works on the west and north-west sides of fort Moultrie were unfinished, and might be forced without much danger. The importance of that fort having been considerably diminished on being passed by the fleet, Colonel Pinckney with a part of the garrison had been withdrawn from it. The admiral made dispositions for

for carrying it by storm, under cover of the fire from the ships. On the 7th of May, every thing being in readiness for the assault, the fort was summoned, and the garrison, amounting to about two hundred men, surrendered themselves prisoners of war. On the same day, the cavalry which had escaped the disaster at Monk's-corner, and had been reassembled under the command of Colonel White, of New Jersey, was again surprised and defeated by Colonel Tarleton.

After Lord Cornwallis had passed Cooper river, the American cavalry found it necessary to interpose the Santee between them and his lordship. In the perfect possession of the peninsula between the Cooper and Santee rivers, that general occasionally employed small foraging-parties, of which Colonel White had notice. He recrossed the Santee, fell in with and captured one of these parties; and immediately dispatched an express to Colonel Burford, who commanded a regiment of new levies from Virginia, which had arrived too late to enter Charlestown, requesting him to cover his retreat over the Santee at Lanneau's ferry, where he had also directed some boats to be collected to convey his party over the river. Colonel White reached the ferry before the infantry had arrived, and believing himself to be in no immediate danger, stopped to refresh and feed his horses. Having received notice of this incursion, Lord Cornwallis had

had detached Colonel Tarleton in pursuit of the American party. He arrived at the ferry in a few minutes after White, and immediately charged him. About thirty of the American cavalry were killed and taken, and the remainder dispersed.

The investment of the town was now complete; the advances on the land side were rapid; and it became obvious that the place could be defended only a few days longer. The besiegers had finished their third parallel, which was carried close to the canal; and by a sap pushed to the dam which supplies it with water on the right, they had drained it in many places to the bottom. The garrison, fatigued and worn out with constant duty, was too weak sufficiently to man the lines; their guns were almost all dismounted; most of the merlons demolished; their shot nearly expended; their provisions of bread and meat, with the exception of a very few cows, entirely consumed; and the approaches of the enemy so near, that their marksmen frequently picked off the men from the guns, and killed with certainty any person who showed himself above the lines.

In this state of things, the garrison was summoned a second time to surrender; on which a council was again called, which again advised a capitulation. In pursuance of this advice, General Lincoln proposed terms which were not accepted; upon which hostilities recommenced. The negotiation

tiation was broken off in consequence of a claim on the part of Lincoln, that the militia and inhabitants in arms should not be prisoners of war, but should be permitted to return to their respective homes without molestation.

The besiegers now advanced their works in front of their third parallel, crossed the canal, pushed a double sap to the inside of the abattis, and approached within twenty yards of the American works.

Preparations for an assault by sea and land were making. With less than three thousand men, many of whom were militia, lines, three miles in extent, were to be defended against the flower of the British army, assisted by a powerful maritime force. There was no probability of success in a measure apparently so desperate; and as every prospect of relief was lost, Lincoln could have no motive for sacrificing the brave men under his command, and exposing the property of the inhabitants to the danger arising from persevering to the last extremity.

Alarmed at their situation, and understanding that the difference between the two commanders respected principally those stipulations which related to themselves, the citizens prepared a petition to General Lincoln, entreating him to surrender the town on the terms which had been offered by the besiegers. Yielding to the wishes of the citizens,

zens, supported by the civil authority, he addressed to the British general a letter, offering to surrender the town on the terms Sir Henry Clinton had proposed.

The desperate situation of the garrison did not induce the besiegers to exact more rigid conditions, than they had originally offered; and on the 12th of May the capitulation was signed.

The town and fortifications, the shipping, artillery, and all other public stores whatever, were surrendered in their present state. The garrison, as well the citizens who had borne arms, as the continental troops, militia, and sailors, were to be prisoners of war. The garrison were to march out of the town, and to deposit their arms in front of their works; but the drums were not to beat a British march, nor their colours to be uncased. The continental troops and sailors were to be conducted to some place to be afterwards agreed on, where they should be well supplied with wholesome provisions till exchanged; and the militia were to retire to their homes on parole.

The horses, arms, baggage, and servants, of the officers, were reserved to them; with the single restriction, that their horses should not be taken out of Charlestown, but might there be disposed of by persons to be appointed for that purpose.

Neither the persons nor property of the militia and inhabitants of the town were to be molested while

while they adhered to their paroles; and such provisions as humanity dictated were made for the sick.

These terms being agreed on, the garrison laid down their arms; and General Leslie was appointed by the commander in chief of the British forces to take possession of the town.

The defence of Charlestown was obstinate, but not bloody. The besiegers conducted their approaches with great caution, and always under cover; while the besieged, being too weak to hazard the losses which would probably attend repeated sorties, kept generally within their lines.

The loss on both sides was nearly equal. That of the British was seventy-six killed, and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded; and that of the American continental troops, who manned the lines on the land side, was eighty-nine killed, and one hundred and forty wounded. Of the Charlestown militia artillery, three were killed, and eight wounded; and about twenty of the inhabitants were killed in their houses by random shot.

From the official returns made to Sir Henry Clinton by his deputy adjutant-general, the number of prisoners, exclusive of sailors, appears to have amounted to five thousand six hundred and eighteen men. This report, however, presents a very incorrect view of the real active strength of the garrison. It includes every male adult inhabitant

bitant of the town. The precise number of privates in the continental army, according to the report made to Congress by General Lincoln, was one thousand nine hundred and seventy-seven; of whom, five hundred were in the hospitals. From a journal of the siege kept by Mr. Laumoy, it appears that General Lincoln stated his whole effective force to the council of war convened some short time before the surrender, at fifteen hundred continental troops, and five hundred militia; and his letter to General Washington accords with that statement.

The unfortunate are generally condemned; and the loss of the garrison of Charlestown so maimed the force, and palsied the subsequent operations, of the American government in the southern country, that no inconsiderable degree of censure was bestowed on the officer who had undertaken and persevered in the defence of that place. In his justificatory letter to the commander in chief, General Lincoln detailed at large the motives of his conduct; and stated the testimony on which were founded those delusive hopes of substantial assistance, which tempted him to remain in the town, till the unexpected arrival of the reinforcement from New York had deprived him of the power to leave it.

The importance of that great mart of the southern states, which had become the depôt for the country

country to a very considerable extent around it; the magazines and quantity of military stores there collected, which, from the difficulty of obtaining waggons, could not be removed; the value of the ships of war which must be sacrificed, should the town be evacuated; the intention of Congress that the peace should be defeated, which, though not expressed by any particular resolution, was believed to be apparent from the conduct of that body; the assurances received from authority that the garrison should be made up to about ten thousand men, of whom nearly one-half were to be regular troops; the anxious solicitude expressed on the subject by the government of South Carolina;—all concurred to induce the adoption of a measure which, in its consequences, was extremely pernicious to the union. In the opinion of those who were best enabled to judge of his conduct, General Lincoln appears to have been completely justified. The confidence of his government, and the esteem of the commander in chief, sustained no diminution.

Sir Henry Clinton was well aware of the impression his conquest had made, and of the value of the first moments succeeding it. He was persuaded that by showing a force, now entirely irresistible, in various parts of the country at the same time, he should give confidence to the royalists, confirm the timid, attach to his standard all those who

who join the strongest side, and complete the depression and submission of those whose wishes might still favour the revolution. For this purpose, and to clear the country of any bodies of men who might still remain in arms, he made three large detachments from his army: the first and most considerable to the north of the Santee, towards the frontiers of North Carolina; the second, into the heart of the state, on the south side of that river; and the third up the Savannah towards Augusta.

The northern detachment was commanded by Lord Cornwallis. Soon after passing the Santee, his lordship received intelligence that Colonel Burford, with about four hundred men, was lying near the borders of North Carolina, entirely unapprehensive of danger.

To disperse this party, Lord Cornwallis detached Colonel Tarleton with the cavalry, and a new corps of light infantry, called "the Legion," mounted on horseback. After a rapid movement of a hundred and four miles in fifty-four hours, Tarleton overtook Burford in a line of march at the Waxhaws. A surrender was immediately demanded on the terms which had been granted to the garrison of Charlestown. This was refused. While the flags were passing, Tarleton continued to make his dispositions for the assault. The instant the truce was over, his cavalry made a furious charge

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on the Americans, who had received no orders to engage, and who seem to have been uncertain whether to defend themselves or not. In this state of dismay and confusion, some threw down their arms and begged for quarter, while others fired on the assailants. No quarter was given. Colonel Burford with a few cavalry escaped; and about a hundred infantry, who were somewhat advanced, saved themselves by flight: but the regiment was almost demolished. The official account given by Colonel Tarleton, the exactness of which is not questioned, states a hundred and thirteen to have been killed on the spot, a hundred and fifty to have been so badly wounded as to be paroled because they were incapable of being moved, and the remaining fifty-three to have been brought away as prisoners. The loss of the British amounted only to twelve killed and five wounded.

An attempt was made to justify this carnage, by alleging that the Americans, after affecting to yield, had again taken up their arms and fired on the assailants. The American officers who escaped the massacre of the day aver the contrary; and when their situation comes to be considered, there is much reason to believe that the fact was agreeable to their statement of it.

After the defeat of Burford, there remained in the states of South Carolina and Georgia scarcely the appearance of opposition. The military force

employed by Congress in that quarter was nearly destroyed. The spirit of resistance among the people seemed entirely broken; and a general disposition to yield quietly to the victor displayed itself in almost every part of the country.

The two other detachments found no appearance of an enemy. They received every where the submission of the inhabitants; who either became neutral by giving their paroles not to bear arms against his Britannic Majesty, or took the oaths of allegiance, and thereby resumed the character of British subjects.

To keep up this disposition, garrisons were posted in different stations, where it was supposed they might be useful, and a series of measures was pursued for the purpose of settling the civil affairs of the province, and of giving stability to the conquest which had been made.

So entirely did the present aspect of affairs convince Sir Henry Clinton of the perfect subjugation of the state, and of the favourable disposition of the great body of the people towards the establishment of the British government, that, on the 3d of June, he ventured to issue a proclamation, in which, after reciting that it had now become proper that all persons should take an active part in settling and securing his majesty's government, and delivering the country from that anarchy which for some time past had prevailed, he discharged

charged from their parole the militia who were prisoners, with the exception only of those who were taken in Charlestown and fort Moultrie, and restored them to all the rights and duties belonging to subjects and inhabitants; declaring at the same time, that such of them as should neglect to return to their allegiance, and to his Majesty's government, should be considered and treated as enemies and rebels to the same.

This proclamation, to which Sir Henry Clinton could only have been prompted by a conviction that the militia, on ceasing to be prisoners, might become useful subjects, removed the veil from the eyes of those who had flattered themselves, that by submission they might escape the military service with which they had been harassed, and disclosed to them their real situation. They perceived that a state of neutrality, or of quiet, was not within their reach; that the evils of war were unavoidable; that they must arrange themselves on one side or the other; and that there was no alternative between driving the enemy out of their country, and being employed against their countrymen.

With the most sanguine hopes of the entire recovery of the southern states, Sir Henry Clinton embarked on the 5th of June for New York, leaving in South Carolina about four thousand British troops, under the command of Lord Cornwallis.

His lordship found it impossible to prosecute immediately the expedition he had meditated into North Carolina. Not only the intense heat of the season, but the impracticability of supporting an army in that country before harvest, without magazines previously laid up, obliged him to defer, for some time, his operations against that state. His first care was to distribute his troops through South Carolina and the upper parts of Georgia, so as to favour the great immediate objects of enlisting and forming into corps the young men of the country who were willing to join his standard; of arranging the plan of a militia; and of collecting magazines at convenient stations, whence supplies might be drawn when active operations should commence.

In the mean time he dispatched emissaries to his friends in North Carolina, with whom he had kept up a regular correspondence, informing them of the necessary delay of his expedition into their country, and requesting them to attend to their harvest, to collect provisions, and to remain quiet till the King's troops should be ready to enter the province, which would not be till late in August, or early in September.

This salutary counsel was not observed. The impatience of the royalists in that country, stimulated by the triumph of their friends in a neighbouring state, and by the necessary severities of a vigilant government, could not be restrained by the

the cautious advice now given them. Having anticipated the immediate superiority of their party, they could not brook the authority exercised over them; and broke out into premature and ill-concerted insurrections, which were vigorously encountered, and generally suppressed. One body of them however, amounting to about eight hundred men, led by a Colonel Bryan, marched down the east side of the Yadkin to a British post at the Cheraws, whence they proceeded through South Carolina to Camden.

Having made all his dispositions, and fixed on Camden as the place for his principal magazines, Cornwallis left the command of the frontiers to Lord Rawdon; and as the civil government, as well as the command of the army, had devolved on him, he retired to Charlestown, for the purpose of making those further arrangements of a civil nature, which the state of affairs and the interest of his sovereign might require. A board of police was established for the administration of justice, till the situation of the province should admit of the restoration of its former civil government; and commercial regulations were made for permitting to a certain extent the exportation of the produce of the country.

Lord Cornwallis, as well as Sir Henry Clinton, seems to have considered the state of South Carolina as reannexed to the British dominions, in sentiment

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as well as in appearance. Impatient to derive active aids from the new conquest, he appears not to have suspected that the influence of former affections and habits, with the experience that their change of situation did not diminish their calamities, might induce them, if compelled again to take up arms, to turn them against the King's troops. His measures were therefore calculated to admit of no neutrality among the people, but to constrain them to take the oath of allegiance to his sovereign.

For some time these measures seemed to be crowned with all the success which the most sanguine could have expected from them, and professions of loyalty were made in every quarter. But under this imposing exterior lurked a mass of concealed discontent, to which every day furnished new matter, and which only waited for a proper occasion to show itself.

The people of the lower parts of South Carolina were generally attached to the revolution, and had entered into the war with zeal. They were conducted by a high-spirited and intelligent gentry, who ardently pursued the independence of the United States as a real and permanent good.

Several causes had combined to suspend the operation of this sentiment. Many of their leaders were prisoners; and the brilliant success which had attended the British arms since the first landing of Sir Henry Clinton, had produced in many the most absolute

absolute despair of ever seeing the power of the United States revive in South Carolina. Others who did not entirely despond, were sensible of the inutility of present resistance; a still greater number, fatigued and harassed with militia duty, were not unwilling to withdraw from the conflict, and as peaceful spectators to await the issue of the war. To compel these men to share the burden of the contest, was in a great measure to determine them to adhere to their former friends.

This inclination was in no small degree increased by the irritations which they continually experienced. The licentiousness of a soldiery, spread through a rich and feeble country, can seldom be restrained; and in South Carolina this was scarcely attempted. The spirit of plunder seems rather to have been countenanced, and means were used to allure from their masters a species of property, which unfortunately constitutes the most valuable portion of the wealth of the southern states.

In the latter end of March, General Washington had obtained the consent of Congress to reinforce the southern army with the lines of Maryland and Delaware, and with the first regiment of artillery. This detachment was to be commanded by the Baron de Kalb, a German veteran, who had engaged very early in the service of the United States.

Such,

Such, however, was the deranged state of the finances of America, and such the depression of public credit, that the troops ordered to the aid of the southern states could not immediately be put in motion. The military chest was absolutely exhausted; and those who had furnished any supplies whatever on credit, had suffered too much by the depreciation of money to be willing again to trust the government.

By great exertions the detachment was at length enabled to move. After marching through Jersey and Pennsylvania, the troops embarked at the head of the Elk, and were conveyed by water to Petersburg in Virginia, whence they proceeded by land towards South Carolina.

Their progress through North Carolina was delayed by those difficulties of obtaining subsistence which had induced Lord Cornwallis to defer the invasion of that state till harvest should be gathered. No magazines of provisions had been laid up, nor preparations made for facilitating the march of the army. The country was destitute of flour, and afforded very few fat cattle. No commissary having been provided by the state to purchase supplies, the troops were reduced to the necessity of spreading themselves over the country in small detachments, to collect corn, and have it ground for their daily food. In this manner they proceeded slowly through

through the upper and more fertile parts of North Carolina to Hillsborough; and were preparing to march by the way of Cross-creek to Salisbury, where they were to be joined by the militia of North Carolina.

The approach of this army, and the information that great exertions were making in Virginia to augment it, revived the hopes of the South Carolinians, and brought once more into action a spirit supposed to have been entirely extinguished. The British troops having occupied the north-western parts of the state, the most active and conspicuous friends of the revolution in that quarter had fled from their homes, and had sought an asylum in North Carolina and Virginia. As the discontents of their countrymen increased, and the prospect of being supported by regular troops brightened, a small body of these exiles, amounting to less than two hundred, assembled together, and choosing Colonel Sumpter, an old continental officer, for their chief, entered South Carolina. They skirmished with the royal militia, and small corps of regulars on the frontiers, sometimes successfully, and always with the active courage of men fighting for the recovery of their property. The followers of Sumpter were speedily augmented to six hundred men, and a disposition once more to resort to arms discovered itself in various parts of the

state.

state. Some corps of militia which had been embodied under the authority of Lord Cornwallis deserted his standard, and joined their countrymen. This change of temper was perceived by the British general, who found it necessary to draw in his outposts, and to collect his troops into larger bodies.

Aware of the danger to which the loss of Charlestown had exposed that part of the confederacy, Congress deemed it of the utmost importance to select a general for that district, in whom great military talents might be combined with that influence over the state authorities, which would enable him to draw out their resources. Towards Gates their attention was directed; and the most sanguine hopes were entertained, that in the conqueror of Burgoyne would be found the saviour of the southern country.

On the 13th of June, 1780, he was called to the chief command in the southern department, and was directed to repair immediately to his station.

General Gates was at his seat in Berkeley county when this appointment was notified to him. The state of his district requiring immediate attention, he entered, without loss of time, on the duties belonging to his office.

On the 25th of July he reached the camp, then at Buffaloe-ford on Deep river, where he was received

ceived by the Baron de Kalb with the utmost cordiality and respect. The army consisted of the Maryland and Delaware troops, amounting to between twelve and thirteen hundred rank and file; of Armand's legion, amounting to about one hundred cavalry and infantry; and of three companies of Colonel Harrison's regiment of artillery, containing about the same number; and large reinforcements of militia were promised by Virginia and North Carolina. Lieutenant-colonel Porterfield, who had marched late in April from Williamsburg, at the head of a body of state troops, composed of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, amounting to between three and four hundred men, was on the frontier towards South Carolina.

This valuable officer was pressing forward to aid in the defence of Charlestown, when that place surrendered to Sir Henry Clinton. He afterwards continued to advance, in the expectation that by approaching the scene of action, some useful employment might present itself; and he was within one day's march of Colonel Burford, when that officer was surprised, and his regiment cut in pieces by Tarleton's legion. After this disaster, Porterfield continued on the frontiers; and had the address not only to avoid the fate which had befallen every other corps sent to the relief of Charlestown, but to subsist his men, and to keep

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up the semblance of retaining that part of South Carolina.*

The Baron de Kalb had determined to deviate from the direct road to Camden, that he might conduct his army through a more plentiful country, and establish at proper places magazines for its support, and hospitals for the reception of his sick.

But General Gates thought it more conducive to the public interests to form an immediate junction with all the troops in the state, and to take the most direct road to the vicinity of the British encampments. This led through a barren country, which furnished but scanty supplies even for the use of its inhabitants.

On the 27th of July the army was put in motion, and soon experienced all the distresses which had been apprehended by de Kalb, and which had determined him to take the upper road. Their sufferings were extreme. They subsisted principally on lean cattle accidentally found in the woods; and the supply even of this wretched food was insufficient in quantity. Meal and flour were so scarce, that the army was obliged to make use of green corn and peaches, as the best substitutes for bread the country could afford. The diseases with

* Gordon.

which

which the troops were afflicted in consequence of this diet, of the intense heat of the season, and of the unhealthiness of the climate, threatened the destruction of the army.*

Having at length made its way through a country of pine barrens, sand-hills, and swamps; and effected a junction on its route with General Caswell, who commanded the militia of North Carolina, and with Lieutenant-colonel Porterfield; the army reached Clermont, sometimes called Rugely's-mills, on the 13th of August. Possession was taken of this place without any opposition from Lord Rawdon; who, on the approach of the American army, drew in his outposts, and assembled all his forces at Camden.

The day after the arrival of Gates at that station, he was joined by the militia from Virginia, amounting to seven hundred men. They were led by Brigadier-general Stevens, an officer of considerable merit, and of unquestionable bravery, who during the campaigns of 1777 and 1778 had commanded a continental regiment.

On the same day an express arrived from Colonel Sumpter, who reported to Gates that a number of the South Carolina militia had joined him on the west side of the Wateree; and that an

* Gordon.

escort

escort of clothing, ammunition, and other stores for the garrison at Camden, was on the way from Ninety-six, and must pass the Wateree at a ferry about a mile from Camden, which was covered by a small redoubt on the opposite side of the river.

One hundred regular infantry, with two brass field-pieces, and three hundred North Carolina militia, were immediately detached under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Woolford of Maryland, to join Colonel Sumpter, who had orders to reduce the redoubt, and to intercept the convoy.

At the same time, General Gates prepared to advance still nearer to Camden, and, if necessary, to take a position in its vicinity: but he was not without hope that Lord Rawdon would evacuate that post. If in this he should be disappointed, he flattered himself that the reinforcements of militia expected from the upper counties would cut off the supplies required by the town, and leave the garrison an easy prey to the American army.

In a council of general officers convened for the purpose of concerting the plan of future operations, it was determined to put the army in motion that evening, and to take a position about seven miles from Camden, with a deep creek in front.

The sick, the heavy baggage, and the military stores not immediately wanted, were sent under a guard

a guard to Waxhaws, and the army was ordered to be in readiness to march precisely at ten in the evening, in the following order:

Colonel Armand's legion composed the van; Porterfield's light infantry, reinforced by a company of picked men from Stevens's brigade, marching in Indian files, two hundred yards from the road, covered the right flank of the legion; while Major Armstrong's light infantry of North Carolina militia, reinforced in like manner by General Caswell, in the same order, covered the left. The Maryland division, followed by the North Carolina and Virginia militia, with the artillery, composed the main body and rear guard; and the volunteer cavalry were equally distributed on the flanks of the baggage.

In case of an attack in front by the enemy's cavalry, the infantry on each flank were directed instantly to march up, and continue to fire on the assailants. This it was supposed would enable Colonel Armand to resist the shock. His orders therefore to stand the attack of the cavalry, whatever their numbers might be, were to be considered as positive.

The most profound silence was enjoined; and the troops were ordered, as they approached the enemy, where the ground would admit of it, to march in columns; the artillery at the head of their

their respective brigades, and the baggage in the rear.

On receiving these orders, Colonel Otho H. Williams, the deputy adjutant-general, showed Gates an abstract of the field-returns of the different corps, from which it appeared that the whole American army, officers included, and exclusive of the troops detached to join General Sumpter, did not exceed four thousand men. The continental infantry amounted to about nine hundred, and the cavalry to about seventy. This strength did not equal the expectations of the general; but his plan was formed, and he was unwilling to relinquish it. About ten at night the line of march was taken up; and the army had advanced about half-way to Camden, when a firing commenced in front.

Intelligence of the approach of Gates, and of the defection of the country between the Peedee and the Black river, had been communicated by Lord Rawdon to Lord Cornwallis, and had induced the latter to repair in person to Camden, which place he reached the day Gates arrived at Clermont.

The militia ordered into service so far exceeded the numbers actually brought into the field, that a just estimate of the strength of an enemy drawn from that source can seldom be made; and Lord Cornwallis counted the army of Gates at six thousand men.

The

The British troops had been much reduced by sickness. Their whole effective force, including officers,* did not much exceed two thousand, of whom about nineteen hundred were regulars.

The position of Camden, however advantageous in other respects, was not well chosen for sustaining an attack; and as the whole country was rising, Lord Cornwallis expected that every day would add to the strength of the Americans, and increase the difficulty of his communication with the sea.

There appeared to be a necessity either for retreating to Charlestown, or attacking the American army.

In the event of a retreat, he must abandon his sick at Camden, amounting to near eight hundred men, with his magazines; and give up all South Carolina and Georgia, with the exception only of Charlestown and Savannah. These places could not be lost, should he even be defeated, because their present garrisons were sufficient for their defence.†

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* The field return of Lord Cornwallis shows one thousand nine hundred and forty-four rank and file, of whom three hundred were volunteer militia. The commissioned and non-commissioned officers, staff, &c. amounted to about three hundred.

† Letter of Lord Cornwallis.

The consequences of a retreat appearing nearly as pernicious as any which could attend a defeat, he took the bold resolution of attacking Gates in his camp at Clermont. This determination was undoubtedly confirmed by the intelligence that the position of the continental troops in the American army, from whom alone he expected a serious resistance, was by no means well chosen.

Having formed this resolution, he hoped by a prompt execution of it to surprise his adversary. By one of those caprices of fortune on which great events often depend, he marched from Camden to attack Gates in Clermont, at the very hour that Gates moved from that place towards Camden.

About half past two in the morning of the 16th of August, the advanced parties of the hostile armies, to their mutual surprise, met in the woods, and immediately began to skirmish with each other. Some of the cavalry of Armand's legion being wounded by the first fire, threw the others into disorder, and the whole recoiled so suddenly, that the first Maryland regiment in front of the column was broken, and the whole line of the army thrown into consternation. From this first impression, the raw troops seem never to have recovered.

The light infantry, however, executed their orders; and those under Porterfield, particularly, behaved

behaved so well, as completely to check the advance of the party with which they were engaged.

Unfortunately, their gallant commander received a mortal wound, which compelled him to leave his regiment.

A part of the light infantry still kept their ground, and was supported by the vanguard of the legion infantry. The enemy being thus halted, the American army soon recovered its order.

In this first rencounter, a few prisoners were taken on both sides; who gave to the respective generals a knowledge of circumstances, of which both till then were ignorant.

The British accounts state that Lord Cornwallis himself repressed the firing of his van, for the purpose of forming the line; and finding the American army to be on ground suited to his numbers, with morasses on each wing, which prevented the extension of their line so as to take him in flank, he determined not to hazard in the dark those advantages which the light would give to his disciplined troops.*

He kept his ground; and frequent skirmishes ensued during the night, with scarcely any other effect than to discover the situation of the armies, to evince the intentions of the generals, and to

* Letter of Lord Cornwallis.

serve as a prelude to what was to occur in the morning.

Immediately after the alarm, the American army was drawn up in the following order:

The second Maryland brigade, commanded by General Gist, formed the right of the line, and was flanked by a morass. The North Carolina militia under General Caswell formed the centre; and the Virginia militia under General Stevens, flanked also by a morass, and by the light infantry, assisted by Colonel Armand's corps, composed the left. The artillery was divided to the brigades. The first Maryland brigade, under General Smallwood, was posted two or three hundred yards in the rear, as a corps de reserve. Baron de Kalb commanded on the right, the militia generals their respective troops, and General Gates resolved to be in person where his presence should be most useful.

The army being thus arranged in order of battle, the general officers were called together. The intelligence received from the prisoners was communicated to them, and their opinions asked on the measures to be adopted. General Stevens answered, "that it was now too late to retreat." A silence of some moments ensued; and General Gates, who seems himself to have been disposed to try the chance of a battle, understanding silence to be an approbation of the sentiments delivered by

by Stevens, broke up the council by saying, "Then we must fight. Gentlemen, please to take your posts."

At the first dawn of day a British column appeared about two hundred yards in front of some pieces of artillery which had been posted near the road, in the American centre. Colonel Williams ordered these pieces to play on them; and about the same time the British began to form the line on their right. Thinking this a proper moment to commence the attack with Stevens's brigade, Williams rode to General Gates, who was with the corps de reserve, and suggested this measure to him. It received his approbation, and Williams returned to put it in execution.

By this time the British line was formed. Lieutenant-colonel Webster commanded on their right, and Lord Rawdon on their left. The seventy-first regiment, one battalion of which was posted in the rear of the right, and the other in the rear of the left wing, composed the reserve. The cavalry was stationed in the rear, close to the seventy-first regiment. Four field-pieces were on their left, and one with the corps de reserve.*

Orders to attack having been given to Stevens, he immediately prepared to obey them. Colonel

* Letter of Lord Cornwallis.

Williams

Williams advanced in front of the brigade with a few volunteers, intending by a partial fire to extort that of the enemy at some distance; hoping that the militia would stand the first discharge, and be brought to closer action with their loaded muskets.

Stevens led on his brigade in good order. Endeavouring to inspire them with confidence in the bayonets with which they had been furnished the preceding day, he called to them in the firm tone of courage, "My brave fellows, you have bayonets as well as they; we will charge *them*."

The first movement of the Virginia militia was mistaken by Lord Cornwallis for a mere change of its position. Thinking this a favourable moment for commencing the action, he gave orders to Lieutenant-colonel Webster to begin the attack. On receiving these orders, the British infantry rushed with great impetuosity through the fire of the militia volunteers under Colonel Williams, and with a shout furiously charged the brigade in his rear. The utmost exertions of General Stevens were of no avail. The intimidated militia threw down their arms, fled from the field with the utmost precipitation, and were followed by the militia light infantry of Armstrong. Except one regiment commanded by Colonel Dixon, an old continental officer, which was posted nearest the continental troops, the whole North Carolina

lina division followed the shameful example. Dixon's regiment maintained its ground for great part of the action. Other parts of the same brigade which was commanded by Gregory, made a show of fighting, and the whole paused for an instant; but the terror of their companions was soon communicated to them, and they also threw away their arms, and sought for safety in flight. While endeavouring to rally them, their general was dangerously wounded. Very few of the militia of North Carolina or Virginia discharged a single shot; and a still smaller number brought their muskets off the field.

Tarleton's legion charged them as they broke, and pursued them in their flight. Gates, in person, assisted by their general officers, made several efforts to rally them at different places; but the alarm in their rear still continuing, they poured on like a torrent, and bore him with them. With General Caswell he retired to Clermont, in the hope of stopping a sufficient number of them at their old encampment, to cover in some measure the retreat of the continental troops: but the further they fled, the more they dispersed; and he found it impracticable to collect any considerable number of them. Believing the continental troops also to be dispersed, he gave up all as lost; and retreated with a few friends to Charlotte, about eighty miles from the field of battle. At that

place he left General Caswell to assemble the neighbouring militia, and proceeded himself the next day to Hillsborough, in order to concert with the government some plan for further defence.

Entirely deserted by the militia, who composed the whole centre and left wing of the army, the continental troops, with the Baron de Kalb at their head, were left without orders, under circumstances which might well justify a retreat. But actuated by their courage, and seeing only the path of duty, they preferred the honourable and dangerous part of maintaining their position. They were charged by Lord Rawdon about the time the militia on their left were broken by Webster; but the charge was received with firmness, and the assailants experienced a check they had not expected. The bayonet was occasionally resorted to by both parties, and the conflict was maintained for near three-quarters of an hour with equal obstinacy. During this time, the regiment on the left of the second Maryland brigade, being covered by the reserve, so that they could only be engaged in front, gained ground, and made a considerable number of prisoners.

The corps de reserve, having its left entirely exposed, was flanked by the British right wing under Webster. After detaching a part of his cavalry and light infantry in pursuit of the flying militia, that officer wheeled with the residue of his

his troops on that brigade, and attacking it at the same time in front, and round the left flank, threw it into some disorder. The soldiers, however, were quickly rallied by their officers, and renewed the action with much spirit. Overpowered by numbers, they were again broken; and by the exertions of their officers were again formed, so as still to maintain the combat, and still to cover the flank of the second brigade, who were in a manner blended with the enemy, and who kept up a desperate conflict in the hope of yet obtaining the victory.

The whole British fire was now directed at these two devoted brigades. They had not lost an inch of ground when Lord Cornwallis, perceiving that they were entirely without cavalry, pushed his dragoons upon them, and at the same instant charged them with the bayonet. These gallant troops were no longer able to keep the field. They were at length broken; and as they did not give way till intermingled with the enemy, they dispersed and retreated in confusion. Before they were reduced to this last extremity, the Baron de Kalb, while making a vigorous charge at the head of a regiment of infantry, fell under eleven wounds. His aide-de-camp, Lieutenant-colonel du Buysson, embraced him, announced his rank and nation to the surrounding foe, and begged that they would spare his life. While he thus generously exposed himself

himself to save his friend, he received several dangerous wounds, and with the general was taken prisoner. Although he received every attention and assistance it was in the power of the conquerors to bestow, the baron expired in a few hours. He spent his last breath in dictating a letter expressive of the warmest affection for the officers and men of his division; of the great satisfaction he derived from the testimony given by the British of the bravery of his troops; of his own admiration of the firm opposition they had made to a superior force, after being deserted by the rest of the army; of the infinite pleasure he received from the gallant behaviour of the Delaware regiment, and the companies of artillery attached to his brigades; and of the endearing sense he entertained of the merit of the whole division he commanded. Congress afterwards directed a monument to be erected to his memory, with an inscription testifying their sense of his worth, and their gratitude for his services.

When broken, the continental troops were so closely pursued as to be unable to rally. Never was a victory more complete, or a defeat more total. Every corps was broken and dispersed through the woods. The marshes and brush, which in some degree covered them from the enemy, served to separate them more entirely from each other. The general officers were divided

vided from their men; Rutherford of the North Carolina militia was made a prisoner, but the others reached Charlotte at different times.

About two hundred waggons, with a great part of the baggage, military stores, small arms, and all the artillery, fell into the hands of the conqueror.

The loss sustained in the action could never be accurately ascertained, as no returns from the militia were received. Of the North Carolina division, between three and four hundred were made prisoners, and between sixty and one hundred were wounded. Of the Virginia militia, only three were wounded on the field; and, as they were the first to fly, not many were taken.

For the numbers engaged, the loss sustained by the regulars was considerable. It amounted to between three and four hundred men, among whom were many officers. With the field, Lord Cornwallis gained also such of the wounded as were unable to retreat. This circumstance threw between two and three hundred continental troops into his hands.

In the British accounts given of this action, the whole loss of the American army is stated at eight or nine hundred killed, and about one thousand prisoners: while their own killed and wounded are only admitted to be three hundred and twenty-five, of whom two hundred and forty-five were wounded.

wounded. Although many of the militia were killed during the flight, this account must be exaggerated. While the continental troops kept the field, the loss on both sides, in that part of the action, must have been nearly equal.

In his retreat, the day on which the battle was fought, General Gates received information of the complete success of Sumpter, in the enterprise committed to his charge. On the evening that Lord Cornwallis marched from Camden, Sumpter had reduced the redoubt on the Wateree, captured the guard, and intercepted the escort with the stores; the whole of which, with about forty waggons, and upwards of one hundred prisoners, had fallen into his hands.

This gleam of light cheered but for a moment the gloom which enveloped his affairs. The hope that a respectable force might be re-assembled, which, united with Sumpter's detachment, might arrest for a time the progress of the enemy, was not permitted long to solace him under the misfortune he had experienced. He was soon informed that this corps also was defeated, and totally dispersed.

On hearing of the disaster which had befallen Gates, Sumpter began to retreat up the south side of the Wateree with his captured stores, and with his prisoners, who, including militia taken at different times, amounted to near three hundred

hundred men. On the morning of the 17th, Lord Cornwallis dispatched Tarleton, with the legion and a detachment of infantry, to pursue him. Sumpter had moved with so much celerity, that he believed himself out of danger; and his men were so excessively fatigued and harassed by loss of sleep, and the hard service they had performed, that he had halted on the 18th, during the heat of the day, near the Catawba-ford, to give them some repose. At that place he was overtaken by Tarleton; who, having crossed the river at Rocky-mount-ford, entered his camp so suddenly, as in a great measure to cut off his troops from their arms. Sumpter had placed out videttes; but overpowered with fatigue, and unapprehensive of danger, they had fallen asleep, and gave no alarm.

Some slight resistance was made from behind the waggons, but this was soon overcome; and the consternation occasioned by the surprise was so great, that the Americans fled precipitately to the river and woods. Between three and four hundred of them were killed and wounded. Their baggage, artillery, arms, and ammunition, were lost; and the prisoners and stores they had taken were recovered. This advantage was obtained with the loss of only nine men killed, and six wounded. It is stated by Mr. Stedman, that only one hundred dragoons and sixty light infantry were brought up to the charge; the remaining

part

part of Tarleton's detachment, being unable further to support the fatigue of his rapid march, had stopped at Fishing-creek.

The succeeding day, the intelligence of this disaster reached Charlotte. Generals Smallwood and Gist had then arrived at that place, and about one hundred and fifty straggling, dispirited, half-famished officers and soldiers had also dropped in. There was no obstruction between them and the enemy, and Charlotte was no more defensible than a plain. No place of rendezvous had been appointed; the militia of North Carolina had generally returned to their homes; and those of Virginia had dispersed themselves towards Hillsborough, along the road by which they had marched to effect their junction with Gates. There was consequently no probability of re-assembling them; and it was not expected that those of the neighbouring counties could be raised by General Caswell in less than three days. All these considerations combined to render it advisable to retreat immediately to Salisbury.

Colonel Williams and one of the brigade-majors took the route towards Camden, in order to obtain further intelligence respecting the movements of the enemy, and to direct those coming on that road to file off to Salisbury. An express was dispatched with the necessary information to Major Anderson, of the third Maryland regiment, who had

had rallied a small number of troops not far from the field of action, which was increased by those who fell in with him on the retreat. He had learned that Tarleton, after surprising and defeating Sumpter, had retired down the Wateree; and he therefore proceeded slowly on his march to Charlotte, that he might give the fugitives an opportunity of joining him. From Charlotte he was ordered to Salisbury by General Smallwood; and soon after his arrival at that place, the troops which had been collected there were directed by General Gates to march to Hillsborough. He was endeavouring to assemble at that place another army, which might enable him yet to contend for the possession of the southern states.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

Distress in the American camp—Expedition against Staten Island—Financial regulations—Committee of Congress deputed to camp—General Knyphausen enters Jersey—Sir Henry Clinton returns to New York—Skirmish at Springfield—La Fayette brings intelligence of aid from France—Exertions of Congress and of the commander in chief to strengthen the army—Tardy proceedings of the States—Arrival of a French armament in Rhode Island—Plans of eventual operations—Sir Henry Clinton embarks for Newport—Washington marches against New York—Return of Clinton—Enterprise against New York relinquished—Naval superiority of the British—Plans for the campaign abandoned.

WHILE disasters thus crowded on each other in the southern states, the commander in chief found himself surrounded with difficulties, which not only checked every enterprise he might meditate, but required exertions by no means inconsiderable, to obviate calamities not less distressing than those which befel the union in the south. Not only were his pressing requisitions for men to supply the places of those who were leaving the service uncomplied with, but those

those who remained were with difficulty preserved from either perishing with cold and hunger, or being driven to the necessity of relieving their urgent wants by dispersing and living on plunder.

General Greene and Colonel Wadsworth, who had for the preceding year been at the head of the quarter-master and commissary department, possessed distinguished merit, and had employed assistants of unquestionable ability and integrity. Yet for a great part of the campaign the rations issued to the soldiers were frequently reduced, and the army was scarcely ever furnished with a supply of provisions for more than a few days. Soon after coming into winter-quarters, the magazines were absolutely exhausted, and there was neither meat nor flour to be delivered to the men.

This state of things had long been foreseen, and all the means in the power of the commander in chief had been used to prevent it. Repeated representations of the actual famine with which the army was threatened were made to Congress, and to the several state governments; but such was the wretched condition of the American finances, that no adequate relief was, or perhaps could be, afforded.

The rapid depreciation of the continental currency had long been viewed with apprehensive

anxiety by the enlightened friends of the revolution, and various unsuccessful expedients had been essayed for the purpose of checking its progress. All perceived that the great quantity in circulation was a principal cause of the diminution of its value; and Congress had come to a resolution not to exceed in their emissions two hundred millions of dollars. In the mean time, the utmost endeavours were used to defer as long as possible an evil so justly dreaded; and among the expedients resorted to was that of withholding from the public agents the money which was necessary for public purposes. This unwise experiment, while it defeated its own object, threatened the American army with dissolution.

The difference between the value of the article at the times of contract and of payment was soon perceived, and of course influenced the price agreed on. But this was the least mischievous consequence of a policy so ill judged. The public agents contracted enormous debts which they were unable to discharge. Repeated disappointments destroyed their credit; and, towards the close of the year 1779, they found it impracticable to obtain those supplies which were essential to the subsistence of the army. These circumstances, as they occurred, were communicated to Congress and to the states. Reports of a projected law for the limitation of prices had also their

their influence on the people of the country, and prevented their making the usual exertions for preparing their provisions for market.

From these causes, the contracts entered into could not be adequate to the public wants; and many of those which were made were not complied with.

In this critical state of things, an entire revolution was made in the commissary department. Such was the prejudice entertained against the system adopted by Great Britain for supplying by contract, that it had been usual to allow, as a compensation to the commissary, a stipulated commission on all monies expended on public account. After some time this allowance excited great disgust. It was considered as an inducement to purchase for the continent at high prices, because the purchaser enhanced thereby his own emoluments.

By the new arrangements made on the 1st of January 1780, the commissary-general was to receive a fixed nominal salary in the paper currency; and was permitted to appoint assistants, whose compensations were also fixed, and who were to defray out of those compensations all the expences attending the transacting of the business. The practice of allowing them rations and forage was discontinued.

This new system was unfortunately so modified

fied as to increase the embarrassments of the department. It was soon found difficult to obtain proper assistants and agents for the compensation allowed; for those who were willing to be employed were deemed unequal to the performance of the duties assigned them.

For several days the supply was so inadequate to the demand, that the soldiers were reduced to half, and sometimes to less than half allowance. At length affairs came to the crisis which had long been threatened; and early in January a letter was received from Colonel Wadsworth,* informing the general that it was absolutely out of his power longer to supply the army with meat, as he was without money, and had totally exhausted his credit. About the same time the assistant commissary residing in camp gave notice that his stock of provisions was on the point of being expended, and that he had no immediate prospect of a further supply.

This state of things obliged the commander in chief to adopt such efficacious measures as would certainly relieve the immediate and pressing wants of his army; and which, however dis-

* Though this gentleman had resigned the office of commissary-general, he had, at the particular request of Congress, consented to perform its duties till his successor should be enabled to enter on them.

agree able,

agreeable, were less so than the complaints of a famished soldiery.

He required from each county in the state of Jersey a quantity of meat and flour proportioned to its resources, to be raised and forwarded to the army within a limited time, not exceeding six days. In order to take from this requisition as much as possible of the odium attending it, he addressed to the magistrates a circular letter, stating the urgent wants of the army, and the indispensable necessity of the step he had taken: at the same time informing them that if they did not voluntarily afford the relief required, the extremity of the case was such as to oblige him to resort to a different mode of obtaining it, which would be the more disagreeable as it would probably fall unequally on the inhabitants. At the same time he appointed a field officer to each county, whose duty it was to receive the supplies from the magistrates, if voluntarily furnished; but should that not be done, to collect them by military impressment.

To the honour of the magistrates and people of New Jersey, although their country was much exhausted, the supplies required were instantly furnished, and a temporary relief obtained.

The patient and uncomplaining fortitude with which the army bore their sufferings, was a strong evidence of their superior patriotism, and could

could not fail to make a deep impression on the commander in chief. While, however, he admired the virtue displayed by his soldiers, he could not repress his fears that it might be too severely tried, To Congress he expressed in strong terms his sense of the suffering and merit of the army, and in a letter written about that time to his old and intimate friend General Schuyler he says, " Since the date of my last, we have had the virtue and patience of the army put to the severest trial. Sometimes it has been five or six days together without bread; at other times, as long without meat; and once or twice two or three days without either. I hardly thought it possible, at one period, that we should be able to keep it together; nor could it have been done, but for the exertions of the magistrates in the several counties of this state, on whom I was obliged to call, exposing our situation to them, and in plain terms declaring that we were reduced to the alternative of disbanding or catering for ourselves, unless the inhabitants would afford us their aid. I allotted to each county a certain proportion of flour or grain, and a certain number of cattle, to be delivered on certain days; and for the honour of the magistrates, and good disposition of the people, I must add that my requisitions were punctually complied with, and in many counties exceeded. Nothing but

but this great exertion could have saved the army from dissolution or starving, as we were bereft of every hope from the commissaries. At one time the soldiers ate every kind of horse-food but hay. Buck-wheat, common wheat, rye, and Indian corn, composed the meal which made their bread. As an army, they bore it with the most heroic patience: but sufferings like these accompanied by the want of clothes, blankets, &c. will produce frequent desertions in all armies, and so it happened with us, though it did not excite a single mutiny."

Nor was it in Jersey only that the supplies of provisions from the continental stores totally failed. The same causes produced elsewhere the same effects. At the Highlands on the Hudson, Colonel Hay, the assistant of General Greene, pressed for permission to resign, because without money and without credit he found it impracticable to supply the wants of the army. General Heath was even advised to march a brigade from that station into the interior of the country, where provisions might by some means be obtained. It was only by great individual exertions that even scanty and insufficient supplies could be procured.

The excessive and unusual severity of the winter, while it in some degree accelerated the famine in the camp, seemed to furnish an occasion for active enterprise, which the commander in chief

chief quickly observed, but of which he found himself unable to take advantage.

The garrison of New York and its immediate dependencies was now supposed to be reduced to about ten or eleven thousand effectives; and the security heretofore derived from its insular situation no longer existed. The waters were covered with ice of such thickness, that the whole army, attended by waggons and artillery, might pass over it without danger. New York, although fortified, was of course accessible at various points; for the defences constructed for its security had been planned on the calculation of the surrounding waters remaining open.*

Had it been practicable to carry into execution the scheme so often recommended by the commander in chief, for recruiting the army by draughts to serve twelve months, and to be brought into camp by the first of January in each year; and could means have been taken to furnish the troops with clothes and provisions; the present was a glorious opportunity for striking a blow, which, if successful, would most probably terminate the war. The effort required would seem not to have exceeded the strength of America, could that strength have been exerted in the proper season: but there was neither sufficient

* Annual Register.

energy

energy nor concentration of power in the government to call it forth; and this opportunity for obtaining a decisive advantage passed away, as many which present themselves in the course of human affairs must pass away, if those who should take advantage of them only begin to deliberate about making preparations in the moment for action.

The force under the immediate command of General Washington was decidedly inferior to that in New York; and, so far was he from having reason to expect immediate reinforcements, that Congress had not agreed on making a requisition for them.

In addition to this feebleness in point of numbers, the soldiers actually in camp were not half clothed, and were of consequence totally unfit for the severe service they would have been required to perform; provisions for immediate use could only be obtained by contributions from the people; the quarter-master's department was incapable of putting an army in motion; and the military chest did not contain a dollar.

Under the pressure of this combination of discouraging circumstances, the active and vigorous mind of Washington still looked forward to the possibility of deriving some advantage from the present exposed situation of his adversary.

The troops on Staten Island were computed at a thousand

a thousand or twelve hundred men. The firm and solid bridge of ice now uniting that island to the main land of Jersey, seemed to furnish an opportunity for bearing off the corps on that station, which, notwithstanding existing embarrassments, might be profitably used. To Brigadier-general Irvine, who commanded in that part of the country, and whose brigade participated in all the wants of the army, the wishes of General Washington on this subject were communicated; and he was requested to inform himself, as accurately and secretly as possible, of the state of the island, and its communications with the other posts held by the British general, and with the Jersey shore.

In the very moment of the most extreme distress for provisions, these enquiries were made, and the plan was formed for an attempt on this post.

The intelligence obtained by General Irvine shewed that it was easy to cross over on the ice from Jersey to Staten Island; and that the communications from thence; both to York and Long islands, were extremely difficult if not impracticable. But the officer commanding on the island was said to be apprehensive of an attack, to be very vigilant, and to keep patroles of militia perpetually in motion.

On receiving this information, General Washington

ington resolved to make the attempt with two thousand five hundred men, to be commanded by Major-general Lord Stirling. The more distant troops moved down to join Irvine on sleds; and, to give some chance for a surprise, means were used to inculcate the opinion that they only constituted a relief for the detachment already on the lines.

It was not, however, entirely on surprising the enemy that the general grounded his hopes of success. If, as had been stated, the communications between the several islands were closed, so that no reinforcements could be received from New York and Long Island, it was probable that the troops on Staten Island, though they should return within their fortifications, would soon be compelled to surrender by the American artillery or by the want of provisions.

The night of the 14th was fixed on for the execution of the enterprise; and a detachment was ordered down from Paramus to Newark, with instructions to send parties of observation to Bergen Point, for the purpose of watching the North river and Powles Hook, lest, contrary to the information which had been received, it should be practicable to cross over at that place, and come from New York to the relief of the island.

At the time appointed, Lord Stirling moved over from Dehart's Point with his whole force united;

united; and, detaching Lieutenant-colonel Willet to Decker's house, where Buskirk's regiment, consisting of about two hundred men, was stationed, proceeded himself to the watering place, where their main body was posted. Notwithstanding the precautions which had been taken to favour a surprise, the alarm had been given at each post, and only a few prisoners were made.

Contrary to the intelligence previously received, the communication between the island and New York was still open; and a boat was dispatched to the city, on the first appearance of the Americans before the works. These appeared too strong to justify the hazard of attempting to carry them by assault, and the arrival of some vessels in the afternoon from New York demonstrated the impracticability of compelling a surrender by the want of provisions or of fuel.

The object of the expedition being thus rendered obviously unattainable but at an expence too great to be risked, and there being some cause for apprehending that a reinforcement from New York might endanger the American detachment on the island, Lord Stirling commenced his retreat on the morning of the 17th, which was effected with inconsiderable loss. His rear was charged by a body of cavalry, which was repulsed; but from the intenseness of the cold, and the defectiveness of his means to guard against it,

it, some of his men were frost-bitten, and a few stragglers were made prisoners.

The excessive cold continuing, the rivers were soon afterwards completely blocked up. Even arms of the sea were passable on the ice; which, with the islands about the mouth of the Hudson, presented to the view one whole and unbroken continent.*

Being not perfectly apprised of the debilitated condition of the American army, Major-general Patteson and General Knyphausen, the commanders of the British German forces in and about New York, took those precautions for defence which manifested some degree of alarm at their new and unexpected situation.

The extreme severity of the season produced a great degree of suffering among all classes in New York. Those supplies, for which they depended on a communication by water, totally failed them; and the demand for fuel particularly was so great, that it became necessary to break up some old transports, and to pull down several uninhabited wooden houses, to supply their most pressing necessities.†

To increase this scarcity both of provisions and fuel, such a disposition was made of the American troops posted on the lines, as promised to

* Annual Register. † Ibid.

interrupt

interrupt the communication between the country and town, and to intercept those supplies which various motives, but more than any other, an avidity for hard cash tempted many of the country people to furnish.

These arrangements produced a kind of partisan war, in which the advantage was rather on the side of the British. This was attributable to two causes; the one their superiority in cavalry, and the other the superiority of their position. Their cantonments being tolerably compact, and their stations permanent, forts capable of covering the troops from any sudden attack were constructed, into which they might throw themselves, and remain secure until relieved: while the Americans, having an immense extent of country to guard and protect, could not avail themselves of the same advantage. In one of the most important of these actions, Captain Roberts of Massachussetts and fourteen of his men were killed upon the spot; seventeen were wounded, of whom three died in a few days; and Lieutenant-colonel Thompson of Massachussetts, who commanded the party, two captains, four subalterns, and ninety non-commissioned officers and privates, were made prisoners.

The issue of the full sum of two hundred millions of dollars in continental bills of credit, which Congress had solemnly resolved not to exceed,

ceed, had been completed in November 1779, and was entirely expended. The requisitions on the states to replenish the treasury by taxes had not been fully complied with, and had they even been strictly observed, would by no means have produced a sum in any degree equal to the public expenditure. It was therefore necessary to devise other measures which should afford the means of carrying on the war, During the distresses which brought the army almost to the point of dissolution, these measures were under consideration. So early as December 1779, it had been determined to change the mode which had been adopted for supplying the army by purchases, and to make requisitions of specific articles on the several states. As a preliminary to carrying this system into operation, commissioners were appointed to make the estimates, and to introduce every practicable reform in the expenditures. This subject was under deliberation till the 25th of February: when sundry resolutions were passed, apportioning on the states their respective quotas of provisions, spirits, and forage, for the ensuing campaign; and requiring them to collect, at convenient places, the quotas so apportioned. The value of the several articles required was estimated in specie; and assurances were given that accounts between the states should be regularly

regularly kept, and finally settled in Spanish milled dollars.

For the purposes of inducing and facilitating a compliance with these requisitions, it was further resolved, "that any state which shall have taken the necessary measures for furnishing its quota, and have given notice thereof to Congress, shall be authorised to prohibit any continental quarter-master or commissary from purchasing within its limits."

These resolutions, constituting the basis of a new system, on which the future subsistence of the army was essentially to depend, were too deeply interesting not to receive the anxious attention of the commander in chief. It was with regret he perceived and communicated to Congress radical defects in their arrangements, furnishing serious cause for apprehension that this untried scheme would fail in practice.

The judgment of General Washington, and of all those who were engaged in high and responsible situations, was decidedly in favour of conducting the war on a national, rather than on a state system. But, independent of this radical objection, economy had been so much more consulted than the probable necessities of the army, that, in almost every article, the estimate had fallen far short of the demand to be reasonably expected.

expected. This was an error the more serious in its nature, as the preceding crops had not been abundant, and there was cause to apprehend that the surplus provisions of any state, which should comply with the requisitions of Congress, might be exported, and so great a scarcity be produced, as would render it difficult, if not impossible, to comply with any additional demand.

The total omission to provide means for supplying occasional deficiencies from the surplus resources of any particular state, was an error of still greater magnitude. It was obvious that the demand in any state which should become the theatre of war, would be much greater than its quota in the general appointment; and experience had shown that the carriage of specific articles from distant places was always difficult and expensive, and sometimes impossible. Yet, no means were adopted to supply such extraordinary demand, whatever might be the resources of the country. The system omitted to give any power to the continental agents in such a case; or to authorise any requisition on the particular state, to furnish, by the instrumentality of its own agents, at the expence of the continent, such articles of immediate necessity as might be within its power. And by enabling any state which should take means to comply with the requisitions, and should notify those means to the government of

the union, to prohibit the continental agents from making any purchases within its territory, the general government absolutely disabled itself from relieving any distress which might occur. Some of the states adopted the propositions of Congress. Among these was New Jersey, in which the largest division of the army was stationed. Its legislature passed an act, prohibiting, under severe penalties, the purchase of provisions within its jurisdiction by the staff of the continental line; and declined authorising its own agents to provide for any emergency, however pressing. It was an additional objection to these requisitions, that they specified no periods of the year at which certain portions of the articles demanded should be raised; and consequently might be complied with, although for a considerable part of the campaign the army should be left destitute of every necessary.

These suggestions were made by the commander in chief, but they did not receive the attention which was due to their importance. A disposition in the members of Congress, growing inevitably out of the organization of the government, to consult the will of the states from which they were delegated; and perhaps to prefer their accommodation to any other object, however essential to the whole; had discovered itself at an early period, and had gained strength with time.

The

The state of the national treasury was well calculated to promote this disposition. It was empty, and could only be replenished by taxes, which Congress had not the power to impose; or by new emissions of bills of credit, which they had pledged the public faith not to make, and which would rest, for their redemption, only on that faith which would have been violated in the very act of their emission. Under these circumstances, it required a degree of energy seldom found, to struggle with surrounding difficulties, for the preservation of a general system; and to resist the temptation of throwing the nation, by the system of requisitions, at the feet of the states, where the vital principle of power, the right to levy taxes, was exclusively placed. While the continental currency preserved its value, this essential defect of the system was in some measure concealed. The facility with which money was obtained from paper was a temporary substitute for the command of the resources of the country. But when this expedient failed, it was scarcely possible to advance a single step, but under the guidance of the respective states.

Whatever might be the future effect of this system, it was impracticable to bring it into immediate operation. The legislatures of the several states, by whom it was to be adopted and car-

ried into execution, were many of them not then in session; and they met at different times through the ensuing spring. It was consequently to be expected, that great part of the summer would pass away before the supplies this measure was calculated to raise could be brought into use. In the mean time, and until a new scheme of finance, which accompanied the requisition of specific articles, should be tried, there was no regular fund to be certainly relied on for the support of the army. Bills to the amount of 100,000*l.* sterling, payable at six months after sight, were directed to be drawn on Mr. Jay, and others to the same amount on Mr. Laurens, two of their agents in Europe empowered to negotiate loans. These bills were sold in small sums on pressing occasions; and the loan-offices were still kept open in the several states, for the purpose of borrowing from individuals.

The new scheme of finance was adopted on the 18th of March, and was a second essay to substitute for money, credit unsupported by solid funds, and resting solely on public faith.

The vast quantity of bills unavoidably issued, at a time when no regular civil governments existed possessing sufficient energy to enforce the collection of taxes, or to provide funds for their redemption; and when the powers of Europe were not sufficiently confident of the justice of their

their cause, or of the final event of the contest, to afford them aid or credit; was assigned by Congress as the principal reason of that depreciation which had taken place in the continental currency. The United States were now, they said, under different circumstances. Their independence was secure; their civil governments were established and vigorous; and the spirit of their citizens ardent for exertion. The government being thus rendered competent to the object, it was necessary to reduce the quantity of paper in circulation, and to establish and to appropriate funds that should ensure the punctual redemption of the bills.

For these purposes, the several states were required to continue to bring in to the continental treasury, monthly, from February to April inclusive, their full quotas of fifteen millions of dollars. In complying with this requisition, one Spanish milled dollar was to be received in lieu of forty dollars of the paper currency.

The bills so brought in were not to be reissued, but destroyed; and other bills, not to exceed in quantity one dollar for every twenty dollars received in discharge of taxes, were to be emitted.

These new bills were to be redeemable within six years: and were to bear an interest of five per cent. per annum, to be paid at the time of their

their redemption in specie; or, at the election of the holder, annually, in bills of exchange drawn by the United States on their commissioners in Europe, at four shillings and sixpence sterling per dollar. They were to be issued in ascertained proportions, on the funds of the several states; with a collateral security on the part of the union, to pay the quota of any particular state which might be rendered, by the events of the war, incapable of complying with its own engagements. The bills were to be deposited in the continental loan offices of the several states, and were to be signed only as the money then in circulation should be brought in by taxes or otherwise. After being signed, six-tenths of them were to be delivered to the states on whose funds they were to issue, and the remaining four-tenths to be retained for the use of the Continent.

The operation of this scheme of finance was necessarily suspended by the same causes which suspended that of the requisitions for specific articles. It required the sanction and co-operation of the several state legislatures, many of which were yet to convene.

As it was apparent that the difficulty of preserving the value of the paper money about to be issued would be increased by an adherence on the part of the state governments to the system originally adopted, it was earnestly recommended that they also

also would suspend future emissions, and would take measures to call out of circulation the paper at present current. But the time for this measure had not yet arrived, and many of the states continued to make new issues till late in the following year.

The establishment of the army for the ensuing campaign was fixed at thirty-five thousand two hundred and eleven men; and the measures for recruiting it which preceded by a few days those adopted for its support, partook of the state system which was now entirely predominant. No means whatever were to be used for raising men under the authority of the continent; and the several states were required to take measures, by draught or otherwise, to bring into the field by the 1st day of April the numbers wanted to complete their respective quotas.

Those intelligent minds, in which patriotism was combined with practical good sense, were by no means unapprised of the dangers to be apprehended from a system in which the national character was not even sought to be preserved; and by which the American confederacy became substantially an alliance of independent nations, whose several ambassadors assembled in a general congress for the purpose of recommending to their respective sovereigns that general plan of operations,

tions, which had been there concerted, and which each was at perfect liberty to pursue or to neglect.

That great delays would be experienced, that the different parts of the plan would be acted upon too unequally and too uncertainly to furnish a solid basis for military calculations, that the system of Congress would be totally deranged in its execution, were mischiefs that were foreseen and lamented by many, as resulting inevitably from a course of measures, to which the government of the union was under the painful necessity of submitting.

"Certain I am," said the commander in chief in a private and confidential letter to a member of the national legislature, "that unless Congress speaks in a more decisive tone; unless they are vested with powers by the several states, competent to the great purposes of the war, or assume them as matter of right; and they and the states respectively act with more energy than they hitherto have done; our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill-timing the adoption of measures; by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies; we incur enormous expences, and derive no benefit from them. One state will comply with a requisition from Congress; another neglects to do it; a third executes it by halves; and all differ either in the manner,

manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up hill; and, while such a system as the present one, or rather want of one, prevails, we ever shall be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage.

"This, my dear sir, is plain language to a member of Congress; but it is the language of truth and friendship. It is the result of long thinking, close application, and strict observation. I see one head gradually changing into thirteen. I see one army branching into thirteen; and instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controuling power of the United States, considering themselves as dependent on their respective states. In a word, I see the powers of Congress declining too fast for the consequence and respect which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and am fearful of the consequences."

But whatever might be the objections of General Washington to the principle of the system to be adopted, he was unremitting in his endeavours to render the plan of Congress as perfect in detail as possible, and to give to its execution all the aid which his situation and influence enabled him to afford.

He was particularly urgent with the several state governments on the subject of filling up their regiments. The new arrangements for completing as well as subsisting the army, though they did not

not in terms prescribe this duty, rendered it indispensable. Thirteen independent sovereignties, each exercising its own discretion on the recommendations of Congress, each feeling its own burdens without clearly comprehending the extent of those felt by others, each jealous of bearing an undue proportion of them, were to be negotiated with, and stimulated to exertions which could not be made without great sacrifices, nor without considerable inconvenience to the mass of the people, and consequent violence to their inclinations. No person possessing so much of the public confidence as the commander in chief, nor so much influence with the assemblies in which all the great interests of the nation were to be decided, it was incumbent on him to impress on the several state legislatures the very critical situation of American affairs, and the real hazard to which their independence would be exposed by shrinking from the difficulties of the moment. But the machine was too unwieldy and too complicated for all its parts to move harmoniously, and the general was still under the necessity of struggling with the embarrassments of which he had so frequently complained.

The distresses of the army for food, which had found a temporary relief in the particular exertions of the magistrates and people of New Jersey, soon returned; and it became once more necessary to recur to the same persons for assistance.

It has been already stated that the inability to lay up in time a sufficient stock of provisions for the use of the army, had reduced it to the verge of famine. The same effect, even after the magazines were in some degree replenished, was on the point of being again produced. The supplies for the forage department had failed, and a great proportion of the public horses had perished, or been rendered unfit for use. No means were possessed for the purchase of others, and the quarter-master-general found himself absolutely unable to transport provisions from remote magazines into camp. In consequence of this circumstance, the rations were nearly expended, and the commander in chief was reduced to the painful necessity of calling on the patriotism of private citizens, under the penalty of a military impressment should a voluntary contribution be refused, for those means of conveyance which the government could not supply. The situation of a military officer, thus compelled to exact from individuals with a species of violence a precarious and irregular subsistence for his army, is at all times delicate; but is peculiarly so in a country where the smallest infraction of right is felt and resented; where the conflicting parties are struggling for popular favour, and where the government is so impressed with the necessity of courting that favour by popular measures as to be unwilling to venture on such a course of taxation

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as might rescue him from this unpleasant duty. Only a high and enthusiastic confidence in the character at the head of the army, with a perfect conviction that his requisitions would never be made but in cases of absolute necessity, could have induced an acquiescence in them.

The want of food was not the only difficulty to be surmounted. Others of a serious nature also presented themselves. The pay of an officer was now reduced, by the depreciation of paper, to such a miserable pittance as to be unequal to the supply of the most moderate demands. The pay of a major-general would no longer have compensated an express-rider, and that of a captain would not have furnished the shoes in which he marched when leading his company against the enemy. The American officers were not rich; and many of them, to preserve that appearance which a just military pride inspired them with a solicitude to maintain, had expended their *little all* in supplying themselves with the decent apparel, and other humble accommodations, which they believed to be required by their station. If they had exhausted their private funds, or if they possessed none, they could only rely on the state to which they belonged, for such clothing as the state might be willing or able to furnish. These supplies were so insufficient, and so unequal, as to produce the most extreme dissatisfaction. In the lines of some of the

states,

states, the officers in a body gave notice of their determination to resign on a given day, if some decent and certain provision should not be made for them. The remonstrances of the commander in chief, representing the danger to which such a measure would expose that cause for which they had already suffered so much, produced an offer to serve as volunteers till their successors should be appointed; and, on the absolute rejection of this proposition, they were with difficulty induced to remain in the service.

Under such complicated difficulties it required all that enthusiastic patriotism which pre-eminently distinguishes the soldier of principle; all that ardent attachment to the cause in which they were engaged, which originally brought them into the field, and which their sufferings had in no degree diminished; all the influence of the commander in chief, whom they almost adored; to retain in the service men who felt themselves neglected, and believed themselves to be objects of the jealousy rather than the gratitude of their country.

Among the privates, there grew out of the very composition of the army, causes of disgust which in no small degree increased the dissatisfaction their multiplied wants could not fail to produce.

The first effort made towards the close of the campaign of 1776, to enlist troops for the war, had

had in some degree succeeded. In some of the states, especially in Pennsylvania, a considerable proportion of the recruits had, for small bounties, engaged for the war. While men under these circumstances found themselves obliged to continue in service without compensation, and often without the common necessaries of life, they perceived the vacant ranks in their regiments to be filled up by men who were to continue only for a few months; and who, for that short service, received from individuals or from their states bounties which were of great real value, and which, to soldiers not perfectly acquainted with the actual state of depreciation, appeared to be immense. They could not fail to compare situations, and to look back with infinite chagrin at engagements which deprived them of advantages they saw in the possession of others. Many were induced to contest those engagements;* many to desert a service in which were experienced such irritating inequalities; and all felt, with the most poignant indignation, those distressing failures in the commissary department, which so frequently recurred.

* In some instances the civil authority of the state in which such soldiers were, attempted to interfere and to discharge even those belonging to the lines of other states, who asserted their right to be discharged. It was with some difficulty the general could prevent this dangerous interposition.

In

In consequence of the strong representations made to Congress on these various causes of disquiet, a committee of three members was appointed to repair to camp, for the purpose of consulting with the commander in chief on such arrangements as the means they possessed might enable them to make, and the present state of the army might require. They thus represented the condition of the troops: "that the army was unpaid for five months; that it seldom had more than six days provisions in advance, and was, on several occasions, for sundry successive days without meat; that the army was destitute of forage; that the medical department had neither sugar, tea, chocolate, wine, nor spirituous liquors of any kind; that every department of the army was without money, and had not even the shadow of credit left; that the patience of the soldiers, borne down by the pressure of complicated sufferings, was on the point of being exhausted."

In the mean time a resolution was passed, declaring that Congress would make good to the line of the army, and to the independent corps thereof, the deficiency of their original pay, which had been occasioned by the depreciation of the continental currency; and that the money or other articles hitherto received, should be considered as advanced on account, to be comprehended in the settlement to be finally made: it being

being their determination that all the troops serving in the continental army should be placed on an equal footing. The benefits of this resolution were confined to those who were then in actual service, or should afterwards come into it; and who were engaged for the war, or for three years.

These resolutions, which were published in general orders, had considerable influence on the army; but not sufficient to remove the various causes of dissatisfaction which existed, and were continually multiplying. The engagement to make good the depreciation of their pay, if punctually complied with, was an act of justice believed to have been too long withheld; and no promise relating to the future could supply the place of present comfortable subsistence. In this respect there appeared to be no hope for a melioration of their condition. For a considerable time the troops received only from one-half to one-eighth of a ration of meat; and at length were several days without a single pound of that necessary article.

This long course of suffering had unavoidably produced some relaxation of discipline; and had gradually soured the minds of the soldiers to such a degree, that their discontents broke out into an actual mutiny.

On the 25th of May, two regiments belonging to Connecticut paraded under arms, with a declared resolution to return home, or to obtain subsistence

sistence at the point of the bayonet. The soldiers of the other regiments, though they did not actually join the mutineers, showed no disposition to suppress the mutiny. By great exertions on the part of the officers,* aided by the appearance of a neighbouring brigade of Pennsylvania, then commanded by Colonel Stuart, the leaders were secured, and the two regiments brought back to their duty. Some sentiments, however, were disclosed by the soldiers, in answer to the remonstrances of their officers, of a serious and alarming nature. Their pay was now five months in arrear; and the depreciation of the money, they said, was such, that it would be of no value when received. When reminded of the late resolution of Congress, for making good in future the loss sustained by this depreciation, of the reputation acquired by their past good conduct, and of the value of the object for which they were contending, they answered, that their sufferings were too great to be longer supported; that they wanted present relief; and must have some immediate and substantial recompence for their services. A paper was found in the brigade, which appeared to have been brought by some emissary from New York, stimulating the troops, by artful insinuations, to the

* Colonel Meiggs, who was particularly active, was struck by a soldier while he was endeavouring to restore order.

abandonment of the cause in which they were engaged.

The discontents of the army, occasioned by their accumulated wants, and the complaints excited in the country by the requisitions so frequently made on the people of New Jersey, had been communicated with such exaggerations to the officer commanding in New York, as to induce the opinion, that the American soldiers were ready to desert their standards, and the people of New Jersey to change their government. To countenance these dispositions, and probably to avail himself of them so as to break up the post at Morris-town, General Knyphausen crossed over on the 6th of June, with about five thousand men, from Staten island, and landed in the night at Elizabeth-town Point in New Jersey. Early next morning, they marched into the country, towards Springfield, by the way of Connecticut farms: but they soon perceived that the information which had been given them was incorrect; and that the real temper, both of the country and the army, had been entirely misunderstood.

General Washington had taken measures, in concert with the government of New Jersey, to call out the militia as soon as the occasion for them should present itself; and, on the first appearance of the invading army, they assembled with a degree of promptness and alacrity seldom equalled.

On

On the march to the Connecticut farms, distant five or six miles from Elizabeth-town, the British were harassed by the small patrolling parties of continental troops who were on the lines, and whose numbers were augmented every instant by the neighbouring militia. An irregular galling fire was kept up, wherever the face of the country admitted of it; and although the American force was not sufficient to make a stand at any place, yet the resolution and temper to be encountered in the further progress of the expedition, were too clearly manifested to be misunderstood.

At the Connecticut farms, a flourishing settlement, which took its name from the country of those by whom it had been planted, and which had been distinguished for its zeal in the American cause, a halt was made. In a spirit of revenge unworthy the general of an army,—which was in the character of Tryon, who was present, rather than of Knyphausen who commanded,—which served more to injure than advance the interests of those in whose cause he was engaged, and which tended more to irritate than intimidate,—this settlement, including the meeting-house, and the house of the clergyman belonging to the village, was reduced to ashes*.

* This circumstance would scarcely have deserved notice, had it not been accompanied by one of those melancholy

From the farms, Knyphausen proceeded towards Springfield. The Jersey brigade, commanded by

events which even war does not authorize, and which the civilized world condemns; and which made at the time a very deep impression.

Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of the clergyman who has been mentioned, had been induced to remain in her house, under the persuasion that her presence might serve to protect it from pillage, and that her person could not possibly be endangered; as, in the hope of preserving the farms, Colonel Dayton, who at that time commanded the militia, determined not to halt in the settlement, but to take post at a narrow pass on the road leading to Springfield. While she was sitting in the midst of her children, having a sucking infant in her arms, a soldier came up to the window and discharged his musket at her. She received the ball in her bosom, and instantly expired.

Ashamed of an act so universally execrated, it was contended by the British that this lady was the victim of a random shot, and even that the fatal ball had proceeded from the militia; in proof of which last assertion, they insisted that the ball had entered on that side of the house which looked towards the retreating Americans. But it was notorious that the militia made no stand at the farms; and a pathetic representation of the fact, made to the public by the afflicted husband, received universal credence, and excited universal indignation.

The death of Mrs. Caldwell might indeed be considered as the act of a single soldier, and therefore not of itself involving the reputation of the army; but when with it was connected the wanton and useless devastation committed by authority, these acts formed one connected whole in the public mind, and served still more to confirm the settled hate against the British government.

General

General Maxwell, and all the militia of the neighbourhood, who assembled in great force, took an advantageous position at that place, and seemed determined to defend it. From some cause not ascertained, Knyphausen halted in its neighbourhood, and remained on his ground till night. Some light skirmishing was kept up between the advanced parties: but the Americans were too weak to act offensively; and from some cause not easy to be assigned, no attempt was made by the British to dislodge them.

Having received intelligence of this movement, General Washington put his army in motion early in the same morning on which Knyphausen marched from Elizabeth-town Point; and he advanced to the Short hills, in the rear of Springfield, while the British were in the neighbourhood of that place. The proper dispositions were made for an engagement, and it seems to have been expected that the next day would have produced serious events. Knyphausen, however, had been received in a manner so different from his expectation, that he relinquished the further prosecution of his enterprise, and retired in the night to the place where he had debarked.

He was followed by a detachment which attacked his out-posts early in the morning of the succeeding day; and at first pressed on with great eagerness, in the expectation of encountering only the

the rear of an army, the main body of which had already passed into Staten island. In fact, only a part of the cavalry, artillery, and military stores, had been thrown over, and the main body still remained: This mistake was soon discovered and corrected.

General Washington continued on the hills in the neighbourhood of Springfield, too weak to hazard an engagement, but on ground chosen by himself. Conjecturing the ultimate object of this movement to be the destruction of the military stores at Morris-town, he had, at the first approach of danger, directed every exertion to be made for their removal to a place of safety; while, with the principal part of his army, he should take a position to cover them, on which he might fight to advantage should the enemy be disposed to engage him. The precise amount of continental troops in the camp at Springfield is not stated, but is said to have been less than three thousand men. In a return of the whole army under his immediate command, made on the third of June, the number present fit for duty was stated at only three thousand seven hundred and sixty rank and file. So reduced by the wretched policy of short enlistments, by the absolute debility of Congress, and by the failure of the several states to make timely exertions to bring their quotas into the field, was that force on which America relied for independance!

independance! "You but too well know," said General Washington in a letter to a friend, giving an account of this incursion, "and will regret with me, the cause which justifies this insulting manœuvre on the part of the enemy. It deeply affects the honour of the states; a vindication of which could not be attempted in our present circumstances, without most intimately hazarding their security, at least so far as it may depend on the preservation of the army. Their character, their interest, their all that is dear, call upon them in the most pressing manner to place the army immediately on a respectable footing."

However he might feel this insult, and however he might be disposed to avenge it, the importance of this remnant of an army to the independance of his country,—not only from the impression its loss would make on the public mind, but also from the spirit it would, if preserved, infuse into the new levies expected to fill its ranks, and into the militia occasionally called out to reinforce it,—was too great to permit its being hazarded in an unequal conflict. Making detachments, therefore, to watch the German general, and to avail themselves of any advantage which might be offered, he retained his strong position on the heights about Springfield.

What motive could induce the long continuance of Knyphausen on Elizabeth-town Point, was a question

a question by no means easy of solution. The only objects in Jersey, which appeared to be sufficient to have occasioned the invasion of that state, were the stores at Morris-town, and the American army. Without pursuing either of these, he had thrown a bridge of boats across the Sound to Staten island, had erected some works which seemed calculated only to cover his rear when he should retreat; and had preserved his position so compact, as to afford the American general no opportunity to undertake any thing important against him.

These circumstances gave strength to a suspicion that Sir Henry Clinton was about to return from South Carolina; that, without debarking his troops at New York, he would proceed up the Hudson to West Point, the garrison of which was weakened by the same causes which had extended their baneful influence over the other parts of the army; and that the present manœuvre was a feint designed to cover the real object. General Washington communicated these impressions to Major-general Howe, the officer then commanding in the Highlands; and requested him to concentrate his forces about West Point, so as to secure that post, and protect his troops from the possibility of being cut off in detail. But as the real object of the enemy might yet be the army in Jersey, he also suggested the policy of endeavouring to excite alarms for the safety of New York.

The

The present gloomy aspect of American affairs was well depicted in various letters from the commander in chief, addressed to those who might be expected to have influence in providing for the present, or against future similar, emergencies. In writing to a committee of Congress deputed to confer with him on the state of public affairs, and, among other things, to make the successive requisitions on the several respective states, and to urge the necessity of complying with them, he said: "General Knyphausen still continues in the Jerseys, with all the force which can be spared from New York—a force greatly superior to ours. Should Sir Henry join him, their superiority will be decided, and equal to almost any thing they may think proper to attempt. The enemy, it is true, are at this time inactive; but their continuance in their present position proves that they have some project of importance in contemplation. Perhaps they are only waiting till the militia grow tired, and return home (which they are doing every hour,) to prosecute their designs with the less opposition. This would be a critical moment for us. Perhaps they are waiting the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton, either to push up the North river against the Highland posts, or to bend their whole force against this army. In either case the most disastrous consequences are to be apprehended. You, who are well acquainted with our situation, need no arguments to evince the danger.

"The

"The militia of this state have run to arms, and behaved with an ardour and spirit of which there are few examples. But perseverance in enduring the rigours of military service is not to be expected from those who are not by profession obliged to it. The reverse of this opinion has been a great misfortune in our affairs, and it is high time we should recover from an error of so pernicious a nature. We must absolutely have a force of a different composition, or we must relinquish the contest. In a few days we may expect to rely almost entirely on our continental force, and this, from your own observations, is totally inadequate to our safety. The exigency calls loudly on the states to carry all the recommendations of the committee into the most vigorous and immediate execution, but more particularly that for completing our battalions by a draught, with all possible expedition."

In this precise state of things, with an army the total of which was five thousand five hundred and fifty-eight continental troops, and of which the operating force was little more than three thousand, he received, on the 18th of June, the alarming intelligence of the return of Sir Henry Clinton, with about four thousand men, from the conquest of South Carolina.

The regular force in New York and its dependencies was now estimated at twelve thousand effective

fective rank and file, a great part of which might be drawn into the field for a particular purpose; because, in addition to it, the British general could command for garrison duty about four thousand militia and refugees.

In communicating to Congress the appearance of a fleet off the Hook, which he rightly conjectured to be Admiral Arbuthnot returning from the south with Sir Henry Clinton, General Washington observed: "A very alarming scene may shortly open, and it will be happy for us if we shall be able to steer clear of some serious misfortune in this quarter. I hope the period has not arrived which will convince the different states, by fatal experience, that some of them have mistaken the true situation of this country. I flatter myself, however, that we may still retrieve our affairs, if we have but a just sense of them, and are actuated by a spirit of liberal policy and exertion equal to the emergency. Could we once see this spirit generally prevailing, I should not despair of a prosperous issue to the campaign. But there is no time to be lost. The danger is imminent and pressing; the obstacles to be surmounted are great and numerous, and our efforts must be instant, unreserved, and universal."

After the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton, the design of acting offensively in the Jerseys was resumed. To diminish by dividing the force to be encountered,

encountered, the jealousy of General Washington for West Point was excited. Among the indications which were given of a disposition to attack that post, the transports were assembled, and the troops embarked, as if an expedition up the North river was intended.

The possession of the posts in the Highlands was an object of too much interest to be neglected. General Washington, therefore, put the most considerable part of his army in motion, for the purpose of being in forwardness to repel any attempt which might be made in that quarter. But, as the indications which had been given of an expedition up the Hudson might be intended merely to deceive, he left General Greene at Springfield with two brigades of continental troops, and with the Jersey militia; while, with the greater part of his army, he proceeded in person slowly towards Pompton, watching attentively the movements of the British general, and apparently unwilling to separate himself too far from General Greene. He had not marched further than Rockaway, eleven miles beyond Morris-town, when the British army advanced from Elizabeth-town towards Springfield, in such force, and with so serious an aspect, as to induce the opinion that a determined effort for the destruction of the military stores deposited in that part of the country was certainly to be made. Under the impression that this was their object, he

he detached a brigade to hang on their right flank, and returned rapidly himself five or six miles, in order to be in a situation to support Greene, and otherwise to counteract the ulterior views of the enemy.

Early in the morning of the 23d, the British army, consisting of about five thousand infantry, a large body of cavalry, and from ten to twenty field-pieces, marched by two different roads with great rapidity towards Springfield. Major Lee was advanced on the Vauxhall road, which was taken by the right column, and Colonel Dayton on the direct road, which was taken by the left. Both these corps made every possible opposition to their progress; while General Greene concentrated at Springfield his little army, which had been extended for the purpose of guarding the different roads leading through the several passes of the mountains in the rear of that place. Scarcely was he able to make his dispositions, when the front of the British appeared in view; and a cannonade commenced between their van and the American artillery, which had been so posted as to defend a bridge over Raway, a small river running east of the town. This bridge, over which the enemy were obliged to pass, was guarded by Colonel Angell with his regiment, amounting to less than two hundred men. At a second bridge Colonel Shrieve was posted with his regiment, in order

order to cover the retreat of Angell from the first. Major Lee, with his dragoons and the piquets under Captain Walker, supported by Colonel Ogden, was directed to defend a bridge on the Vauxhall road. The residue of the continental troops were drawn up in a body on high ground, in the rear of the town, with the militia on their flanks.

The right column of the British advanced on Lee, who obstinately disputed the passage of the bridge, till a body of the enemy forded the river above him, and gained the point of a hill which endangered his position. He was then under the necessity of withdrawing his corps to avoid being surrounded.

At this instant, their left attacked Colonel Angell. That officer, turning all the advantages of his position to the best account, maintained his ground with the most perserving gallantry. The conflict was sharp, and was kept up for about half an hour. Greene was unable to support him, because his whole continental force did not amount to one thousand men; and there was reason to apprehend, that, should he desend from the heights, the English would ford the river above the bridge, and take possession of them. Colonel Angell, therefore, was at length compelled by superior numbers to give way; but he retired in perfect order, and brought off his wounded. His retreat was covered by Colonel Shrieve, who, after Angell had

had passed him, was ordered by General Greene to rejoin his brigade. The English then took possession of the town, which was reduced to ashes.

The obstinate resistance they had encountered; the gallantry and discipline displayed by the continental regiments which had been engaged; the strength of Greene's position; the firm countenance maintained by his troops, small detachments of whom kept up a continual skirmishing with a view to save a part of the town; all contributed to deter Sir Henry Clinton from a further prosecution of his original plan. He withdrew that afternoon to Elizabeth-town, and in the same night passed over into Staten island. It is presumable that a disposition to avoid any dangerous enterprise had been occasioned by the intelligence he had received, that a formidable fleet and army from France was daily expected on the American coast.

When the Marquis de la Fayette obtained permission to revisit his native country and offer his services to his sovereign, he retained, with his rank in the army of America, that ardent zeal for her interests, which the affectionate attentions he had received, the enthusiasm of a soldier in the cause of those for whom he had made his first campaigns, and by whom he had been highly distinguished, combined with a consciousness that he was substantially promoting the permanent interests

interests of France, were all so well calculated to inspire in a young and generous mind, in favour of an infant people, struggling for liberty and independance, with the hereditary rival of his nation.

He was received at the court of Versailles with every mark of favour and distinction; and all the influence he had acquired was employed in impressing on the cabinet the importance and policy of granting succours to the United States.

Having succeeded in this favourite object, in which he was aided by the representations of the former and present minister of France at Philadelphia, and finding no probability of active employment on the continent of Europe, he obtained permission to return to America, with the grateful intelligence of the service he had rendered while in France to the country in whose cause his sword had first been drawn. He arrived late in April at Boston, in a royal frigate, and hastened to head-quarters. He then proceeded to Congress with the information that his Most Christian Majesty had consented to employ a considerable land and naval armament in the United States, for the ensuing campaign. He was received by General Washington with that joy and affection, and by Congress with those marks of distinction and regard, to which his constant and indefatigable zeal in support of the American cause,

cause, as well as this last signal service, gave him such just pretensions.

The intelligence brought by the Marquis de la Fayette, gave a new impulse both to Congress and the state legislatures. That lethargic slumber into which they seemed to be sinking, yielded to resolutions of the most vigorous complexion. A requisition was made on the states, from New Hampshire to Virginia inclusive, for ten millions of dollars, part of their quotas which became due on the 1st of March, to be paid immediately, if possible, but at the furthest within thirty days; and specie bills to the amount of fifty thousand dollars were directed to be drawn at sixty days sight on Messrs. Franklin and Jay, two of their commissioners in Europe. The sums to be raised both by this requisition and the sale of bills, were sacredly appropriated to the objects of bringing the army into the field, and forwarding their supplies in such manner as the exigency and nature of the service might require.

The defects in the requisition system of the 25th of February, which had been suggested in the month of March by General Washington, were now acted on and corrected: and, to avoid the delays inseparable from deliberations of Congress, the powers of their committee in camp, at the head of which was the late General Schuyler, were so enlarged, as to enable them, at the re-

quest of the commander in chief, to take all such necessary measures as Congress could take, for calling out the resources of the nation.

To give effect to these resolutions, the several state legislatures, from New Hampshire to Virginia inclusive, were requested to invest either the executive authority or some other persons, with powers sufficiently ample, to comply with such applications as might be made to them by the committee in camp.

A circular letter was addressed to the state governments, in which they were stimulated to second the efforts of Congress, by all those motives which in the present crisis might be expected to operate most powerfully on them. The hope of terminating the war, and the distresses of their country, by vigorous exertions; the danger to result from permitting the glorious occasion now about to offer, to pass away unimproved; the disgrace they would incur in the opinion of the world, and more especially of their allies, if they should now be wanting to themselves; were all pourtrayed in the most lively and animating colours.

Letters equally well calculated to stimulate the mind to that point, which the approaching conjuncture was supposed to require, were written by the committee from camp; and the commander in chief also, both in his public letters and

and in his confidential communications to those of his private friends who possessed weight in the state legislatures, used all that influence which his high character and great services had conferred on him, to induce an exertion proportioned to the crisis. In addition to those incentives which might operate on ardent minds, he endeavoured, by a temperate review of the situation and resources of the belligerent powers, to convince the judgment, that America would have real cause to fear the issue of the contest, should she neglect to improve, by one great and manly effort, the advantage to be afforded by the succours expected from France.*

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* A Letter to President Reid of Pennsylvania, from which the following extracts are taken, is selected from many others written with the same view.

" DEAR SIR, *Morristown, May 28th*, 1780.

" I am much obliged to you for your favour of the 23d. Nothing could be more necessary than the aid given by your state towards supplying us with provisions. I assure you, every idea you can form of our distresses will fall short of the reality. There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery, that it begins at length to be worn out, and we see in every line of the army the most serious features of mutiny and sedition; all our departments, all our operations, are at a stand; and unless a system very different from that which has for a long time prevailed, be immediately adopted throughout the states, our affairs must soon

Under the impressions produced by these representations, some of the state legislatures vested

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become desperate beyond the possibility of recovery. If you were on the spot, my dear sir, if you could see what difficulties surround us on every side, how unable we are to administer to the most ordinary calls of the service, you would be convinced that the expressions are not too strong, and that we have every thing to dread: indeed I have almost ceased to hope. The country in general is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interests, that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better.

"The committee of Congress, in their late address to the several states, have given a just picture of our situation. I very much doubt its making the desired impression; and if it does not, I shall consider our lethargy as incurable. The present juncture is so interesting, that if it does not produce correspondent exertions, it will be a proof that motives of honour, public good, and even self-preservation, have lost their influence upon our minds. This is a decisive moment; one of the most, I will go further and say the most, important America has seen. The court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance: and if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind; nor can we, after that, venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what it will appear we want inclination or ability to assist them in.

"Every view of our own circumstances ought to determine us to the most vigorous efforts; but there are considerations of another kind, that should have equal weight. The combined fleets of France and Spain last year were greatly superior to those of the enemy: the enemy nevertheless sustained no material damage, and at the close of the campaign gave a very important blow to our allies. This campaign,

extensive powers in the executive; and they generally passed laws for completing their several

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paign, the difference between the fleets, from every account I have been able to collect, will be inconsiderable. Indeed it is far from clear that there will not be an equality. What are we to expect will be the case if there should be another campaign? In all probability the advantage would be on the side of the English, and then what would become of America? We ought not to deceive ourselves. The maritime resources of Great Britain are more substantial and real than those of France and Spain united. Her commerce is more extensive than that of both her rivals; and it is an axiom that the nation which has the most extensive commerce will always have the most powerful marine. Were this argument less convincing, the fact speaks for itself: her progress in the course of the last year is an incontestable proof.

"It is true, France in a manner created a fleet in a very short space; and this may mislead us in the judgment we form of her naval abilities. But if they bore any comparison with those of Great Britain, how comes it to pass, that with all the force of Spain added, she has lost so much ground in so short a time, as now to have scarcely a superiority? We should consider what was done by France as a violent and unnatural effort of the government; which, for want of sufficient foundation, cannot continue to operate proportionable effects.

"In modern wars, the longest purse must chiefly determine the event. I fear that of the enemy will be found to be so. Though the government is deeply in debt and of course poor, the nation is rich, and their riches afford a fund which will not be easily exhausted. Besides, their system of public credit is such, that it is capable of greater exertions than

quotas of the army, according to the requisitions of Congress, and also for giving those additional

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than that of any other nation. Speculatists have been a long time foretelling its downfal; but we see no symptoms of the catastrophe being very near. I am persuaded it will at least last out the war.

"France is in a very different position. The abilities of her present financier have done wonders; by a wise administration of the revenues, aided by advantageous loans, he has avoided the necessity of additional taxes. But I am well informed, if the war continues another campaign, he will be obliged to have recourse to the taxes usual in time of war, which are very heavy, and which the people of France are not in a condition to endure for any length of time. When this necessity commences, France makes war on ruinous terms; and England, from her individual wealth, will find much greater facility in supplying her exigencies.

"Spain derives great wealth from her mines; but it is not so great as is generally imagined. Of late years the profit to government is essentially diminished. Commerce and industry are the best mines of a nation; both of which are wanted by her. I am told her treasury is far from being so well filled as we have flattered ourselves. She is also much divided on the propriety of the war. There is a strong party against it. The temper of the nation is too sluggish to admit of great exertions: and though the courts of the two kingdoms are closely linked together, there never has been in any of their wars a perfect harmony of measures; nor has it been the case in this, which has already been no small detriment to the common cause.

"I mention these things to show that the circumstances of our allies, as well as our own, call for peace; to obtain which we must make one great effort this campaign. The present instance

aids of militia which were demanded, Unfortunately, the same energy was not discovered in the

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instance of the friendship of the court of France, is attended with every circumstance that can render it important and agreeable, that can interest our gratitude or fire our emulation. If we do our duty, we may even hope to make the campaign decisive of the contest. But we must do our duty in earnest, or disgrace and ruin will attend us. I am sincere in declaring a full persuasion that the succour will be fatal to us, if our measures are not adequate to the emergency.

"Now, my dear sir, I must observe to you, that much will depend on the state of Pennsylvania. She has it in her power to contribute, without comparison, more to our success than any other state, in the two essential articles of flour and transportation.

"I speak to you in the language of frankness and as a friend. I do not mean to make any insinuations unfavourable to the state. I am aware of the embarrassment the government labours under from the open opposition of one party, and the underhand intrigues of another. I know that, with the best dispositions to promote the public service, you have been obliged to move with circumspection. But this is a time to hazard, and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity, and give their support.

"The matter is reduced to a point. Either Pennsylvania must give us all the aid we ask of her, or we can undertake nothing. We must renounce every idea of co-operation; and must confess to our allies, that we look wholly to them for our safety.

"This will be a state of humiliation and bitterness, against which the feelings of every good American ought to revolt. Yours, I am convinced, will; nor have I the least doubt that

you

execution of these laws, as was displayed in their enactment. In general, the assemblies followed the example of Congress; and apportioned on the several counties or towns within the state, the qeota to be furnished by each. This division of the state was again to be subdivided into classes, and each class was to furnish a man by contributions or taxes imposed upon itself. In some instances a draught was to be used in the last resort; in others the man was to be recruited by persons appointed for that purpose, and the class to be taxed with the sum given for his bounty.

These operations were slow, and far from producing the numbers required.

It was not on the state sovereignties only, that beneficial effects were produced by a candid statement of public affairs; and by the strong representations which were made of the happy or unfavourable consequences to grow out of the mili-

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you will employ all your influence to animate the legislature and the people at large. The fate of these states hangs upon it. God grant we may be properly impressed with the consequences.

"I wish the legislature could be engaged to vest the executive with plenipotentiary powers. I should then expect every thing practicable, from your abilities and zeal. This is not a time for formality or ceremony. The crisis, in every point of view, is extraordinary, and extraordinary expedients are necessary. I am decided in this opinion."

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tary force now crossing the Atlantic, as America should avail herself of the aid, or continue in a sluggish torpor. Several patriotic individuals contributed largely from their private funds to aid the public. The merchants and other citizens of Philadelphia, with a zeal guided by that sound discretion which turns expenditure to the best account, established a bank, for the support of which 315,000*l.* in Pennsylvania money was subscribed, to be paid if required in specie, the principal object of which was to supply the army with provisions and rum. By the plan of this bank, its members were to derive no emolument whatever from the institution: their credit was to be employed, and their money advanced if necessary, for the benefit of the continent, and the relief of the army; and they only required that Congress should pledge the faith of the union to reimburse the costs and charges of this transaction in a reasonable time, and should give such assistance in its execution as might be in their power. These stipulations were readily entered into; and thus an institution was commenced on the patriotism of individuals, by which, at a time when the public credit was at its lowest ebb, and the public exigencies were most pressing, it was intended to furnish the army with three millions of rations, and three hundred hogsheads of rum.

The ladies of Philadelphia too gave a splendid example

example of patriotism, by subscribing large donations for the immediate relief of the suffering soldiers. This example was extensively followed;* but it is not by the contributions of the generous, that a war can or ought to be maintained. No purse but that of the nation can equal the expenditures which are unavoidable; and when all are interested in a contest, all ought to contribute to its support. Taxes, therefore, and taxes only, can furnish for the prosecution of a national war

* This instance of patriotism on the part of our fair and amiable country-women is by no means single. Their conduct throughout the revolutionary war was uniform. They shared with cheerfulness and gaiety the privations and sufferings to which the situation of their country exposed them. In every stage of this severe trial, they displayed virtues which have not been always attributed to their sex, but which it is believed they will, on every occasion calculated to unfold them, be found to possess. With a ready acquiescence, with a firmness always cheerful, and a constancy never lamenting the sacrifices which were made, they not only yielded up all the elegances, delicacies, and even conveniences, to be furnished by wealth and commerce, relying on their farms and on domestic industry for every article of food and raiment; but, consenting to share the produce of their own labour, they gave up without regret a considerable portion of the covering designed for their own families, to supply the wants of a distressed soldiery; and heroically suppressed the involuntary sigh, which the departure of their brothers, their sons, and their husbands, for the camp, rended from their bosoms.

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those means which are either just in themselves, or competent to the object. The distresses therefore of the army, for clothing especially, still continued, notwithstanding these donations, and were the more severely felt when a co-operation with the French troops was expected. So late as the 20th of June, General Washington informed Congress, that he still laboured under the painful and humiliating embarrassment of having no shirts to deliver to the troops, many of whom were absolutely destitute of that article; nor were they much better supplied with some other necessaries. "For the troops to be without clothing at any time," he added, "is highly injurious to the service, and distressing to our feelings; but the want will be more peculiarly mortifying, when they come to act with those of our allies. If it be possible, I have no doubt immediate measures will be taken to relieve their distress.

"It is also most sincerely to be wished, that there could be some supplies of clothing furnished to the officers. There are a great many whose condition is still miserable. This is in some instances the case with the whole lines of the states. It would be well for their own sake, and for the public good, if they could be furnished. They will not be able, when our friends come to cooperate with us, to go on a common routine of duty;

duty; and if they should, they must from their appearance be held in low estimation."

Few circumstances display in stronger colours the real patriotism of the American army, than this picture of their condition. One heroic effort, though it may dazzle the mind with its splendour, is an exertion most men are capable of making; but continued patient suffering, and unremitting perseverance in a service not only promising no personal emolument as a compensation for danger and fatigue, but exposing the officer unceasingly to wants of every kind, and especially to those circumstances of humiliation which seem to degrade him in the eyes of others, demonstrate a fortitude of mind, a strength of virtue, and a firmness of principle, which ought never to be forgotten.

As the several legislative acts which were required to bring into the field an army competent to the great objects now contemplated, did not pass till the months of June and July, General Washington remained uninformed of the force on which he might rely, and was consequently unable to determine on any certain plan of operations for the combined armies.

This suspense was the more cruelly embarrassing, as the propriety of making any attempt upon New York depended absolutely upon a prompt compliance

compliance on the part of the states with the requisitions which had been made on them. If the American army should be sufficiently strong to authorise operations against that place, it was of the utmost importance that the French fleet, on its first arrival, should take possession of the harbour, which was then weakly defended. But should this measure be adopted, and the fleet be afterwards unsupported, not only would it be totally ineffectual, but, in a very possible state of things, the fleet itself might become the victim of the enterprise.

Should it be ascertained that the states were either unable or unwilling to make the exertions necessary for the siege of New York, there were other objects against which the allied arms might be turned to advantage. To avoid the disgrace and danger of attempting what could not be effected, and the reproach of neglecting any attainable object, was equally desirable, and equally required a correct knowledge of the measures which would be taken by the states.

In a letter from General Washington to Congress, communicating his anxiety on this interesting subject, and his total want of information respecting it, he said: "The season is come when we have every reason to expect the arrival of the fleet, and yet, for the want of this point of primary consequence, it is impossible for me to form a system

a system of co-operation. I have no basis to act upon; and, of course, were this generous succour of our ally now to arrive, I should find myself in the most aukward, embarrassing, and painful situation. The general and the admiral, from the relation in which I stand, as soon as they approach our coast, will require of me a plan of the measures to be pursued, and there ought of right to be one prepared; but, circumstanced as I am, I cannot even give them conjectures. From these considerations, I have suggested to the committee, by a letter I had the honour of addressing them yesterday, the indispensable necessity of their writing again to the states, urging them to give immediate and precise information of the measures they have taken, and of the result. The interest of the states, the honour and reputation of our councils, the justice and gratitude due to our allies, all require that I should without delay be enabled to ascertain and inform them what we can or cannot undertake. There is a point which ought now to be determined, on the success of which all our future operations may depend; on which, for want of knowing our prospects, I can make no decision. For fear of involving the fleet and army of our allies in circumstances which would expose them, if not seconded by us, to material inconvenience and hazard, I shall be compelled to suspend it, and the delay may be fatal to our hopes."

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The tardy proceedings of the states were not less perplexing to Congress than to the commander in chief. To the minister of his Most Christian Majesty, who had, in the preceding January, communicated the probability of receiving succours from France, that body, without calculating with sufficient accuracy the means of complying with its engagements, had pledged itself unequivocally for an effectual co-operation. The minister was then assured that the United States had expectations, on which they could rely with confidence, of bringing into the field at the next campaign an army of twenty-five thousand effectives, exclusive of officers.

To this continental force such numbers of militia were to be added, as to render it competent to any enterprise against the posts occupied by the British within the United States.

Assurances were also given that supplies of provisions for the army, in its greatest numbers, could be obtained; and that such measures for that purpose should be adopted, as would secure the military operations that might be undertaken from being impeded by any deficieney in that respect. It was further stated, that such provisions as the minister of his Most Christian Majesty might require for the French troops designed to act in conjunction with those of the United States should be laid up in magazines under the direction of Congress;

gress; and generally, that the United States would, on being aided by a competent naval force, willingly carry on during the next campaign the most vigorous offensive operations against the common enemy in all the posts occupied by them; but that, without the assistance of such naval force, nothing decisive could be attempted.

About the time when General Washington saw so strongly the necessity of knowing with certainty on what reinforcements he was to calculate, the French minister addressed Congress on the same subject, and the answer given to him was transmitted to the commander in chief. In it were stated at large the measures they had taken to recruit the army, and to obtain supplies of provisions. The present weakness of their military force was attributed principally to the fall of Charlestown, to a diversion of a large portion of it to the southern districts, and to the heavy losses sustained from fatigue and action during a long and tiresome march.

Thus pressed by both their general and their allies, Congress renewed their urgent requisitions on the states; and desired the respective governments to correspond weekly with the committee of co-operation at head-quarters, on the progress made in complying with them.

In the mean time, General Washington meditated unceasingly on the course to be pursued in the various contingencies which might happen.

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He revolved in his mind every possible situation in which both the enemy and himself could be placed, endeavoured to prepare for any plan of operations which might be rendered advisable, and directed the attention of his officers to the same objects.

While thus employed, the arrival of Sir Henry Clinton from the southward diminished, in some degree, the variety of aspects in which the relative situation of the two armies was to be contemplated, and rendered much more problematical the success of any attempt on New York. It was now thought most advisable that the armament from France, instead of proceeding directly to the Hook, as had been proposed in the event of their arriving while Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Arbuthnot were employed in South Carolina, should proceed in the first instance to Rhode Island, where they might disembark their troops, dispose of their sick, and wait till a more definitive plan of operations could be concerted.

To an enterprise against New York there were now many great objections. The garrison amounted to about eleven thousand regular troops, besides refugees, militia, and seamen. The place had been fortified with considerable labour and attention, and the works were covered with a powerful artillery.

In estimating the means of attack, great deductions were to be made from the apparent strength

of the assailants. The army, should it be augmented to such a number as would seem to justify the measure, would be composed chiefly of new levies, who must be brought into the field entirely undisciplined, and, consequently, could not be relied on for that firm and steady courage which is indispensable in the siege of a fortified town defended by a numerous and veteran garrison. The besiegers, it was said, would not be well provided with battering cannon; in addition to which, their supplies of provisions and forage were entirely uncertain.

These considerations were unquestionably entitled to great weight; and, in consequence of them, some of the best officers in the army were of opinion, that all hopes of accomplishing the reduction of New York must be relinquished. But General Washington, who entertained the strongest conviction of the danger to which the independence of his country would be exposed from a longer continuance of the war, conceived that no favourable opportunity to terminate it should be permitted to pass unused, and that much ought to be put in hazard where there was a reasonable prospect of obtaining correspondent advantages. He therefore was still inclined to attempt the reduction of New York.

On the 13th of July, while things remained in this state of uncertainty respecting the result of the

the measures adopted by the state governments, and not more than one thousand men had joined the army, intelligence was received from New York that a large French fleet had been seen between the Capes of Virginia and the Delaware; and the next day a letter of the 11th from General Heath, who had been previously directed to make every preparation for their reception and accommodation in Rhode Island, announced that, on the 10th in the afternoon, the fleet had appeared in sight, and that the ships were then standing into the harbour.

Soon after these communications, letters were received from the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier Ternay, the officers commanding the land and naval forces of France in Newport, transmitting to General Washington an account of their arrival, of their strength, their expectations, and their orders.

The armament fitted out for the West Indies under the Count de Guichen had employed nearly all the transports lying at Brest. It had been intended to furnish others from Havre, St. Maloes, and Bourdeaux, for the transportation of the troops designed to serve in America; and orders to that effect had been given as early as February. But the ports of Havre and St. Maloes were blockaded by an English squadron, and the vessels at Bourdeaux were detained by contrary winds. These

untoward circumstances having rendered the embarkation of the whole detachment designed for the United States entirely impracticable, orders were given to the Count de Rochambeau to sail as early as possible with the first division, to consist of as considerable a number of troops as the ten vessels he should obtain at Brest would enable him to transport across the Atlantic. Between five and six thousand men, with a proper train of field and battering artillery, were embarked as early as the 14th of April, but were detained in port by contrary winds till the 2d of May. The letters of the general and admiral contained assurances that the second division of the army, which only waited at Brest for transports, might soon be expected.

To obviate those difficulties which had occurred on former occasions respecting rank, the orders received by Lieutenant-general the Count de Rochambeau, which were inclosed in his first letter, placed him entirely under the command of General Washington. The French troops were to be considered as auxiliaries; and were therefore, according to the usages of war, to cede the post of honour to the Americans.

It was well understood both by General Washington and the Count de Rochambeau, that the most cordial harmony between the allied forces was essential to their success; and therefore the friendly

friendly dispositions felt by the troops towards each other were carefully cultivated. Warm professions of reciprocal respect, esteem, and confidence, passed between the two commanders; and each endeavoured to impress strongly on the other, and on all the military and civil departments, that the two nations and two armies were united by the ties of interest and affection. On this occasion General Washington recommended to his officers, as a symbol of friendship and affection for their allies, to engraft on the American cockade, which was black, a white relief, that being the colour of the French cockade.

Although the first division of the French troops arrived so late as the middle of July, they found the American force unprepared for active and offensive co-operation. Not even at that time were the numbers ascertained which would be furnished by the states. Yet it was necessary for General Washington to communicate to the Count de Rochambeau the system adopted for the residue of the campaign.

The season was already so far advanced, that if the preparations for the plan of operations contemplated eventually on the arrival of the second division of the French fleet, should be postponed till the new levies should be in camp, or even till their numbers should be known, there would scarcely be time, though every other circumstance should prove

prove favourable, to execute his plan against New York. Such a state of things so ill agreed with the engagements of Congress, and with the interests of the United States, that, trusting to his being enabled by the measures already taken to comply with what was incumbent on him to perform, he determined to hazard much, rather than forego the advantages to be derived from the aid afforded by France.

"Pressed on all sides by a choice of difficulties, in a moment which requires decision," says the general when communicating his resolution to Congress, "I have adopted that line of conduct which agreed with the dignity and faith of Congress, the reputation of these states, and the honour of our arms. I have sent definitive proposals of co-operation to the French general and admiral. Neither the period of the season, nor a regard to decency, would permit delay. The die is cast; and it remains with the states either to fulfil their engagements, preserve their credit, and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat. Notwithstanding the failures pointed out by the committee, I shall proceed on the supposition that they will ultimately consult their own interest and honour, and not suffer us to fail for the want of means which it is evidently in their power to afford. What has been done, and is doing, by some of the states, confirms the opinion

nion I have entertained of sufficient resources in the country. Of the disposition of the people to submit to any arrangement for bringing them forth, I see no reasonable ground to doubt. If we fail for want of proper exertions in any of the governments, I trust the responsibility will fall where it ought; and that I shall stand justified to Congress, my country, and the world."

In the plan of co-operation, however, which was proposed, a decisive naval superiority was considered as the basis of any enterprise to be undertaken by the allied arms. Without it, nothing great could be effected.

This naval superiority being ascertained, New York was the object to be gained; and the general outlines were drawn of a plan for the attempt.

It was suggested, that as the means to be employed by the United States were not yet sufficiently known, nor the time when the additional aids that were expected would arrive completely ascertained, it was impossible to fix positively on a time for the commencement of operations. That which might be named, must be considered as eventual; but it was hoped that by the 5th of August every requisite preparation might be made, and the whole allied force in a condition to act. The 5th of August, therefore, was named as the day on which the French troops should re-embark, and the American army assemble at Morissania.

This

This plan was committed to Major-general the Marquis de la Fayette; who was authorized to explain fully to the Count de Rochambeau the situation of the American army, and the views of the general; and to go more into detail respecting the enterprise proposed, and others which were contemplated. It was however to be considered as a preliminary to the undertaking of any capital operation, that the fleet and army of France should at all events continue their aid, until the enterprise should be successful, or be abandoned by mutual consent. The disaster before Savannah, which had been the prelude to all the calamities in the south, most probably suggested this precaution.

The squadron commanded by the chevalier de Ternay consisted of seven sail of the line, five frigates, and five smaller armed vessels. This was decidedly superior to that of Admiral Arbuthnot, who lay at New York with only four ships of the line and a few frigates. But three days after De Ternay had reached Newport, Admiral Greaves arrived with six ships of the line, and thus the superiority at sea was entirely reversed.

This change of circumstances prevented, of course, any other than an eventual plan for the campaign. De Ternay looked forward to the arrival of the second division of his squadron from Brest: or to a reinforcement from the West Indies, where the Count de Guichen commanded a fleet

fleet understood to be much superior to that opposed to him; and therefore some fortunate event might be counted on which would enable him to detach a part of it, or to sail with the whole, and employ it for a time on the American coast.

On the one or the other of these events depended the practicability of his acquiring the superiority at sea, and acting offensively on that element.

On the arrival of Rear-admiral Greaves off the Hook, Arbuthnot passed the bar with four ships of the line; and hearing that De Ternay had reached Rhode Island, immediately proceeded thither, and cruised off the harbour. Two frigates were left to convoy the army, if Sir Henry Clinton should be disposed to attack the French both by land and sea. On the first arrival of the Count de Rochambeau, he had been put into possession of all the forts and batteries in and about Newport, to the improvement and strengthening of which his first attention was directed. Arbuthnot found the French army in possession of those fortifications; and their ships and frigates moored in a line from Rhode Island to Cananicut shore, so as to act in conjunction with the land forces. Their position appeared too formidable to be attempted by the fleet alone, and Arbuthnot continued on his station off Block Island.

Sir Henry Clinton had meditated an attack on Newport,

Newport, and had made preparations to embark six thousand chosen troops for that purpose; but, in consequence of delays in obtaining the transports necessary for the expedition, the embarkation did not take place for several days, by which time all hopes of success by a *coup de main* had wasted away. On the arrival of the transports and frigates to convoy them, he embarked his troops, and proceeded to Huntingdon bay; where he received communications from the admiral relative to the improved state of the fortifications on Rhode Island, which satisfied him of the impracticability of effecting any thing with the army alone; and, it appearing that Arbuthnot did not approve of any combined attack by sea and land, he returned to his former position, and debarking at White Stone, encamped near the shore, and retained the transports for any further enterprise which might be deemed proper.

General Washington, who lay in Jersey not far from Passaic, received early information of the designs of Sir Henry Clinton, and communicated them to the Count de Rochambeau. As it was impracticable for him to reach Rhode Island in time to unite the American troops to those of their ally, he determined to collect all the force he could possibly assemble, and, making a rapid movement against New York, to attack that place during the absence of Sir Henry Clinton. If the enterprise

enterprise should not be completely successful, of which however he did not absolutely despair, he was sanguine in the hope of being able to seize some strong points which would greatly facilitate the future operations of the allied armies, and of compelling Sir Henry Clinton to abandon any plans which he might have formed against Rhode Island.

Having reinforced West Point with a considerable body of militia, and ordered the continental troops which could be spared from that post to march down the Hudson on its east side, General Washington passed the North river, and was in full march towards King's-bridge, with an army of near ten thousand men exclusive of militia, when the sudden return of Sir Henry Clinton disappointed the hopes which had been formed of finding New York weakly defended. The enterprise being thus defeated, the American army recrossed the Hudson, and took post near Orangetown. In order to facilitate the operations which were still meditated against New York, the commander in chief also took possession of the ground at Dobbs' ferry, about ten miles above King's-bridge, where some works were thrown up to command the communication across the river.

The hope of acquiring a superiority at sea was still cherished, and, of consequence, the designs on New York were only suspended. This hope was

was strengthened by the intelligence that the Count de Guichen had been joined in the West Indies by a powerful Spanish armament.

The Chevalier de Ternay had dispatched a packet to inform him, that he was blocked up by a superior force under Arbuthnot, and to solicit such reinforcements as the situation of the count might enable him to spare. Relying on the success of this application, the American general impatiently expected the moment when De Ternay would be enabled to act offensively. In addition to the prospect of aid from the West Indies, the second division of the armament fitted out at Brest, to consist of four ships of the line, and four thousand land troops, was daily expected. General Washington, therefore, continued to make the most strenuous exertions to place himself in a situation for taking the utmost advantage of the favourable combination of circumstances which was looked for.

In this crisis of affairs, a derangement took place in a most important department, which threatened, though every other circumstance should prove favourable, to disconcert the plans which had been formed.

The immense expenditure of the quarter-master department, the inadequacy of the funds with which it was supplied, and the reciprocal disgusts and complaints produced by these causes, had excited

cited some degree of irritation and dissatisfaction respecting the present state of things, and determined Congress to make a radical change in the system. This subject had been taken up early in the preceding winter; but such were the delays inseparable from the proceedings of a body organized as was the government of the union, that the plan was not reported by a committee till the month of March, nor finally decided on in Congress till the middle of July.

This was a subject of too much interest to the well-being of the army, and to the success of the important operations meditated for the campaign, not to engage the anxious attention of the commander in chief. At his request, while the army lay in winter quarters, the present quarter-master-general, in whose talents he had great confidence, and whose experience enabled him clearly to state the practical defects of the existing system, repaired to Philadelphia, for the purpose of giving Congress all the information he possessed.

The arrangements he proposed are stated to have been such as to withdraw the management of the department almost entirely from the civil authorities, and to place it under the control of the person who should be at its head, subject only to the direction of the commander in chief. These were by no means the arrangements which Congress felt disposed to make. While the subject remained

remained suspended before that body; it was taken up by the committee of co-operation at head-quarters; where the combined experience and talents of Generals Washington, Schuyler, and Greene, were employed in digesting a system adapted to the actual situation of the United States. This was recommended to Congress; and, to give the more weight to his particular opinion by showing it to be disinterested, General Greene offered to continue in the discharge of the duties assigned to him, without any other emolument than his family expences. This plan, whatever might have been its details, was in its general outlines unacceptable to Congress. A system was at length completed by that body, which General Greene believed to be absolutely incapable of execution at the present juncture. A very active campaign was expected, and he had been directed by the commander in chief to contemplate in his arrangements an army of forty thousand men. Yet he was deprived of those assistants on whom he chiefly relied; and was allowed to employ only one deputy for the main army, whatever its numbers might be. These objections to the system were particularly stated; but others appear to have been verbally communicated, which were so radical as to induce an opinion, that if the meditated operations should take place, and a force competent to the objects proposed be brought into the

the field, it would be absolutely impracticable to discharge the duties of the office. Resolving, therefore, not to take upon himself the responsibility of measures, the issue of which must inevitably be calamitous and disgraceful, he determined to withdraw from a station in which he despaired of being useful.

Apprehending the worst consequences from the derangements which must ensue from such a circumstance, in so critical a moment, General Washington pressed him to suspend this decisive step, till the effect of an application, made both by himself and by the committee of co-operation, should be known. They represented to Congress, that not only all such military preparations as would enable them to execute the plans formed for the campaign must cease, but that probably the army itself would be compelled to disperse for want of subsistence, unless measures were adopted to retain in service the present quarter-master-general, and those assistants whom he believed to be indispensable to the proper discharge of the complicated and extensive duties of his office.

These letters were without effect. The bold experiment of totally changing a system of such importance at the opening of a campaign, had been made; and the resolution not to depart from it was fixed. General Greene's resignation was accepted; and the letter conveying it excited so much

much irritation, that a design was intimated of suspending his command in the line of the army. But these impressions soon wore off, and the resentments of the moment entirely subsided.

Colonel Pickering, who succeeded General Greene, possessed in an eminent degree those qualities which fitted him to combat and subdue the difficulties of his department. To great energy of mind and body, he added a long experience in the affairs of the continent, with an ardent zeal for its interests; and General Greene himself, and some of the former officers, at the request of the commander in chief, continued, for some time after their resignation, to render all the services in their power; but there was an absolute defect of means, for which neither talents nor exertions could compensate.

In the commissary department the same distress was experienced. General Washington was driven to the hard necessity of emptying the magazines at West Point, and of foraging on a people whose means of subsisting themselves were already nearly exhausted by the armies on both sides. The inadequate supplies drawn from these sources afforded but a short relief; and once more, at a time when the public imagination was contemplating brilliant plans, the execution of which required steady courage with persevering labour, and consequently large magazines, the army was frequently

reduced

reduced to the most distressing circumstances by the want of food.

So great were the embarrassments produced by this difficulty of procuring subsistence, that although the arrival of the second division of the fleet from Brest was daily looked for, and large bodies of militia, indispensably necessary to the operations which depended on that event, were marching to join him, General Washington was under the necessity of countermanding the orders under which they were proceeding to camp, and of directing them to return home; although he felt a strong conviction, that the delays attendant on bringing them again into the field would greatly procrastinate the execution of the plans which had been formed.

Such was the state of preparation for the campaign, when intelligence was brought by the Alliance frigate that the second division of the fleet designed for the service of the United States, when ready to sail, had been stopped by a British squadron, which completely blockaded the port of Brest. The opinion however prevailed, that the combined fleets of France and Spain would be able to raise the blockade; and should this expectation be disappointed, great confidence was placed in the success of the application which had been made to the Count de Guichen.

General Washington, therefore, under every

discouraging circumstance, still adhered steadily to his purpose respecting New York, and still continued to strain every nerve to provide the means for its execution. The details of the plan of co-operation continued to be the subject of a correspondence with the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Ternay; and at length, for complete explanation on some minute points, on which a perfect coincidence of opinion had not taken place between them, for the purpose also of concerting further eventual measures, and even of laying the foundation for the next campaign, a personal interview was agreed upon, to take place on the 21st of September, at Hartford, in Connecticut.

In this interview ulterior eventual measures, as well as an explicit and detailed arrangement for acting against New York, were the subjects of consideration.

No one of the plans, however, then concerted for the present campaign, could be put in execution. All, except an invasion of Canada, depended on a superiority at sea, which was soon rendered almost hopeless by the certain information that the Count de Guichen, instead of coming to the American coast, had sailed for Europe.

This circumstance not only disappointed every hope of such a naval reinforcement as would give the Chevalier de Ternay the command of the ocean, but enabled the British still further to increase their superiority.

When

When the Count de Guichen sailed for Europe, he took under his protection a fleet of merchantmen returning from the West Indies to France. Believing that he designed to convoy them only to a latitude out of the reach of the cruizers about the islands, and then to return for the purpose of executing the designs against New York, Admiral Rodney sailed for America, where he arrived late in September, with eleven ships of the line and four frigates. This reinforcement not only disconcerted all the plans of the allies, and terminated the sanguine hopes which had been formed at the opening of the campaign, but put it in the power of the British to project in security further expeditions to the south.

It may well be supposed that the commander in chief did not relinquish without infinite chagrin the sanguine expectations he had formed of making the present summer decisive. Never before had he indulged so strongly the hope of happily terminating the war. "We are now," he writes in a private letter to an intimate friend, "drawing to a close an inactive campaign, the beginning of which appeared pregnant with events of a very favourable complexion. I hoped, but I hoped in vain, that a prospect was opening which would enable me to fix a period to my military pursuits, and restore me to domestic life. The favourable disposition of Spain, the promised succour from

France; the combined force in the West Indies, the declaration of Russia (acceded to by other powers of Europe, humiliating the naval pride of Great Britain), the superiority of France and Spain by sea in Europe, the Irish claims and English disturbances, formed in the aggregate an opinion in my breast (which is not very susceptible of peaceful dreams) that the hour of deliverance was not far distant; and that, however unwilling Great Britain might be to yield the points, it would not be in her power to continue the contest. But alas! these prospects, flattering as they were, have proved delusory; and I see nothing before us but accumulating distress. We have been half our time without provisions, and are likely to continue so. We have no magazines, nor money to form them. We have lived upon expedients till we can live no longer. In a word, the history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary devices, instead of system and œconomy. It is in vain, however, to look back; nor is it our business to do so. Our case is not desperate, if virtue exists in the people, and there is wisdom among our rulers. But to suppose that this great revolution can be accomplished by a temporary army, that this army will be subsisted by state supplies, and that taxation alone is adequate to our wants, is in my opinion absurd, and as unreasonable as to expect an inversion of the order

order of nature to acommodate itself to our views. If it were necessary, it could be easily proved to any person of moderate understanding, that an annual army, or any army raised on the spur of the occasion, besides being unqualified for the end designed, is, in various ways which could be enumerated, ten times more expensive than a permanent body of men under good organization and military discipline; which never was, and never will be, the case with new troops. A thousand arguments, resulting from experience and the nature of things, might also be adduced to prove that the army, if it is to depend on state supplies, must disband or starve; and that taxation alone (especially at this late hour) cannot furnish the means to carry on the war. Is it not time to retract from error, and benefit by experience? or do we want further proof of the ruinous system we have pertinaciously adhered to?"

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

Treason and escape of Arnold—Trial and execution of Major André—Parties in Congress—Letter of General Washington on American affairs—Proceedings of Congress respecting the army—Major Tralmadge destroys the British stores at Coram—Army retires into winter quarters—Irruption of Major Carlton into New York—European transactions.

WHILE the public mind was anticipating the great events expected from the combined arms of France and America; while the army was assailed by every species of distress, and almost compelled to disperse by the want of food; while General Washington was struggling with difficulties, and sustaining the mortification of seeing every prospect he had laboured to realize, successively dissipating; treason found its way into the American camp, and was machinating the ruin of the American cause.

The great services and military talents of General Arnold, his courage in battle, and the patient fortitude with which he bore the most excessive hardships, had secured to him a high place in the opinion

opinion of the army, and a large portion of the confidence of his country.

Having not sufficiently recovered from the wounds he had received before Quebec, and at Saratoga, to be fit for active service; and having large accounts to settle with the continent, which required leisure; he was, on the evacuation of Philadelphia in 1778, appointed to take the command in that place.

Unfortunately, with that firmness which he had displayed in the field and in the most adverse circumstances, were not associated that strength of principle and correctness of judgment which might enable him to resist the various seductions to which his high station exposed him in the metropolis of the union. Yielding to the temptations of a false pride and giddy vanity, forgetting that he did not possess the resources of private fortune, he indulged in all the pleasures of a sumptuous table and expensive equipage. Such habits may well be supposed incompatible with good management; and his debts soon swelled to an amount, which it was impossible to discharge. Unmindful of his military character, he engaged in speculations which were unfortunate; and, with the hope of immense profit, took shares in privateers, which were unsuccessful. His claims against the United States were great, and to them he looked for the means of extricating himself from

from the difficulties into which his indiscretions had plunged him: but the commissioners to whom his accounts were referred for settlement, reduced them considerably; and on his appeal from their decision to Congress, a committee reported that the sum allowed him by the commissioners, with which he was dissatisfied, was more than he was entitled to receive. He was charged with various acts of extortion on the citizens of Philadelphia, and with peculating on the funds of the continent. Not the less soured and disgusted by these multiplied causes of irritation, in consequence of their being attributable to his own follies and vices, he gave full scope to his resentments; and indulged himself in expressions of angry reproach against what he termed the ingratitude of his country, which provoked those around him, and gave great offence to Congress. Having rendered himself peculiarly obnoxious to the government of Pennsylvania, as well as to many of the citizens of Philadelphia, formal charges against him were brought by the executive of that state before Congress, who directed that he should be arrested and tried by a court martial.

Such were the various delays occasioned by the movements of the army, and the difficulty of obtaining testimony, that his trial, though commenced in June 1778, was not concluded till the 26th of January 1779, when he was sentenced to be reprimanded

primanded by the commander in chief. This sentence was approved by Congress, and carried soon afterwards into execution.

From the time the sentence against him was approved, if not sooner, it is probable that his unprincipled spirit revolted from the cause of his country, and determined him to seek occasion for making the objects of his resentment the victims of his vengeance.

Every history of the American war exhibits the importance of West Point. Its preservation had been the principal object of more than one campaign; and its loss, it was believed, would enfeeble all the military operations of the continent. Selected for the natural strength of its situation, immense labour, directed by skilful engineers, had been employed on its fortifications, and it was justly termed the Gibraltar of America.

To this fortress Arnold turned his eyes, as an acquisition which would give value to treason, while its loss would inflict a mortal wound on his former friends. As affording the means of enabling him to gratify both his avarice and his hate, he sought the command of it.

To New York the safety of West Point was peculiarly interesting; and in that state, the reputation of Arnold was particularly high. To its delegation he addressed himself: and from a respectable member* belonging to it, a letter had

* Mr. Livingston.

been

been written to General Washington, suggesting doubts respecting the military character of Howe, to whom its defence was then intrusted, and recommending Arnold for that service. From motives of delicacy, this request could not be immediately complied with; but it was not forgotten. Some short time afterwards, General Schuyler, who was then in camp, mentioned to the commander in chief a letter he had received from Arnold, intimating his wish to join the army, and render such service as might be in his power; but stating his inability, in consequence of his wounds, to perform the active duties of the field. The letter also suggested that he could discharge the duties of a stationary command, without much inconvenience or uneasiness from his wounds. General Washington observed, that as there was a prospect of an active and vigorous campaign, he should be gratified with the aid of General Arnold, but did not believe there would be at his disposal any such command as that gentleman had suggested. That so soon as the operations against New York should commence, he designed to draw his whole force into the field, leaving even West Point to the care of invalids and a small garrison of militia. Recollecting, however, the former application on the part of a member of Congress respecting this particular post, he added, "that if, with this previous information, that situation would be more agreeable

agreeable to him than a command in the field, his wishes should certainly be indulged." This conversation being communicated to Arnold, that officer, without openly discovering any solicitude on the subject, caught with eagerness at a proposition which promised to place in his possession the object of his most ardent wishes; and in the beginning of August, he repaired to camp, where he renewed in person the solicitations which had before been indirectly made.

It was at this juncture that the principal part of the British force was embarked on the expedition against Rhode Island; and that General Washington was advancing on New York, in order to avail himself of the weakened state of that place. He offered Arnold the left wing of the army; which he declined under the pretexts mentioned in his letter to General Schuyler. Incapable of suspecting a man who had given such distinguished proofs of courage and patriotism, the commander in chief was neither alarmed at his refusal to embrace so splendid an opportunity as this promised to be, of recovering the favour of his countrymen, nor at the embarrassment accompanying that refusal. Pressing him no further, he assented to the request which had been made; and Arnold was invested with the command of West Point. Previous to his soliciting this station, he had, in a letter to Colonel Robinson, signified his change of

of principles, and his wish to restore himself to the favour of his prince by some signal proof of his repentance. This letter opened to him a correspondence with Sir Henry Clinton; the immediate object of which, after obtaining the appointment he had solicited, was to concert the means of putting the important post he commanded into the possession of the British general.

Major John André, an aid-de-camp of Sir Henry Clinton, and adjutant-general of the British army, a young gentleman who had in an uncommon degree improved the liberal endowments of nature, and who seems to have held a very high place in the esteem and affections of his general, was selected as the person to whom the maturing of Arnold's treason, and the arrangements for its execution, should be committed. A correspondence was for some time carried on between them, under a mercantile disguise, and the feigned names of Gustavus and Anderson; and at length, to facilitate their communications, the Vulture sloop of war moved up the North river, and took a station convenient for the purpose, but not so near as to excite suspicion.

The particulars of the plan digested between them are unknown; but from acts and expressions of Arnold since recollected, its general outlines have been conjectured. Under the pretext of fighting the enemy in the defiles and narrow passes

passes leading to the fortress, he is understood to have designed so to post the greater part of his army in the gorges of the mountains, as to leave unguarded a particular pass, through which the assailants might securely approach and surprise West Point. It is also understood that he was so to have disposed of that part of the garrison which remained in the works, as to make the least possible opposition to those who should attack them; and at the same time, to place his troops in a situation which would compel them to surrender, or be cut to pieces. Arnold had expressed a wish to obtain copies of those exact and minute maps of the neighbouring country, especially on the east side of the river, which General Washington had caused to be made; and, in conversation with his officers, he had frequently avowed a decided opinion, that the enemy ought not to be waited for in the works, but should be met and fought in the narrow passes leading through the mountains.

The time when General Washington was at Hartford was selected for finally adjusting every part of the plan: and, as a personal interview with Arnold would be necessary to complete their arrangements, Major André came up the river, and went on board the Vulture. The place appointed for the interview was the house of a Mr. Smith, without the American posts. Both parties repaired thither in the night at the hour agreed on. Major André

André was brought under a pass in the name of *John Anderson*, in a boat dispatched for the purpose from the shore. While the conference was yet unfinished, daylight approached; and to avoid the danger of dicovery, it was proposed that André should remain concealed till the succeeding night. He is understood to have refused peremptorily to be carried within the American posts; but the promise made him by Arnold to respect this objection, was not observed. They continued together the succeeding day; and when, on the following night, his return on board the Vulture was proposed, the boatmen refused to carry him, because she had, during the day, shifted her station; in consequence of a gun having been moved to the shore, without the knowledge of Arnold, and brought to bear upon her. This embarrassing circumstance reduced him to the necessity of endeavouring to reach New York by land. To render this more practicable, he reluctantly yielded to the urgent representations of Arnold, and, laying aside his regimentals, which he had hitherto worn under a surtout, put on a plain suit of cloaths; and received a pass from General Arnold, authorising him, under the feigned name of *John Anderson*, to proceed on the public service to the White Plains, or lower if he thought proper.

With this permit, he had passed all the guards and posts on the road without suspicion; and was proceeding

proceeding to New York in perfect security, when one of three militiamen, who were employed with others in scouting parties between the lines of the two armies, springing suddenly from his covert into the road, seized the reins of his bridle and stopped his horse. With a want of self-possession, so difficult to be accounted for in a mind equally brave and intelligent, that it would almost seem providential, Major André, instead of producing the pass from General Arnold, asked the man hastily where he belonged to? He replied, "*To below;*" a term designating him to be from New York. "And so," said André, without suspecting the deception practised on him, "am I." He then declared himself to be a British officer on urgent business, and begged that he might not be detained. The other two militiamen coming up immediately, he discovered his mistake, but it was too late to repair it. He offered a purse of gold, and a valuable watch; to which he added the most tempting promises of ample reward, and permanent provision from the government, if they would permit him to escape: but his offers were rejected without hesitation by his captors, who proceeded to search him. They found concealed in his boots exact returns, in Arnold's handwriting, of the state of the forces, ordnance, and defences, at West Point and its dependencies; critical remarks on the works, and an estimate of the

the men ordinarily employed in them; with other interesting papers. He was carried before Lieutenant-colonel Jameson, the officer commanding the scouting parties on the lines; where, regardless of himself, and only anxious for the safety of Arnold, he still maintained the character he had assumed, and requested Jameson to inform his commanding officer that Anderson was taken. Faithful himself, the mind of Jameson rejected the suspicion, that in a gallant soldier, whose blood had flowed liberally in the service of his country, was to be found a traitor. He therefore dispatched an express with the communication which he had been requested to make. On receiving it, Arnold comprehended at once the danger with which he was menaced; and, flying from the punishment he merited, took refuge on board the Vulture, and afterwards proceeded to New York.

When sufficient time for Arnold to make his escape was supposed to have elapsed, André no longer affected disguise or concealment, and acknowledged himself to be the adjutant-general of the British army.

Seeking to correct the mischief which might have been occasioned by the slowness with which he had given faith to circumstances that seem sufficient to have forced conviction on the most incredulous, Jameson immediately dispatched a packet to the commander in chief, containing the papers

papers which had been discovered. This packet was accompanied by a letter from André, in which he related the manner of his capture, and accounted for the disguise he had assumed.

The man conveying these dispatches was directed to meet the commander in chief, who was then on his return from Hartford. Taking different roads, they missed each other; and a delay attended the delivery of the papers, which secured the escape of Arnold. Some time elapsed before they were received; and then the measures taken to apprehend him proved too late. Before the officers dispatched for that purpose could reach Verplank's, he had passed that post; and had got on board the Vulture, which lay a few miles below it.

Every precaution was immediately taken for the security of West Point. The garrison was put on the watch: and General Greene, on whom the command of the army had devolved in the absence of General Washington, was directed to march the nearest division instantly up to King's-ferry, where he would receive further orders. The defection, however, appears not to have extended beyond Arnold himself; and the exact report he was capable of making to Sir Henry Clinton of the situation of West Point, was not such as to induce that officer to hazard an enterprise against it, when unaided by the treason of its commander.

These measures of security being taken, it remained to determine the fate of the gallant and unfortunate André. A board of general officers, of which Major-general Greene was president, and the two foreign generals, La Fayette and Steuben, were members, was called to report a precise state of his case, and to determine in what character he was to be considered, and to what punishment he was liable.

The candour, openness, and magnanimity, with which André had conducted himself from the first moment of his appearance in his real character, had made a very favourable impression on all those with whom he had held any intercourse. From this cause he experienced every mark of indulgent attention; and from a sense of justice, as well as of delicacy, he was informed, on the first opening of the examination, that he was at perfect liberty not to answer any interrogatory which might embarrass his own feelings. But, as if only mindful of his fame; and desirous, by the noble frankness of his conduct, to rescue his character from imputations which he dreaded more than death; he disdained every evasion; and, rendering the examination of any witness unnecessary, he confessed every thing material to his own condemnation, while he would divulge nothing which might involve others.

The board reported the essential facts which had

had appeared; with their opinion, that Major André was a spy, and ought to suffer death. The execution of this sentence was ordered on the day succeeding that on which it was declared.

Superior to the terrors of death, but dreading disgrace, André was deeply affected by the mode of dying which the laws of war had decreed to persons in his situation. He wished to die like a soldier, not as a criminal.

To obtain a mitigation of his sentence in this respect,* he addressed a letter to General Wash-

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* André having been unquestionably a spy, and his sentence consequently just, and the plot in which he had engaged having threatened consequences the most fatal to America, his execution, had he been an ordinary person, would certainly have been viewed with cold indifference; but he was not an ordinary person. It would seem that art had been successfully employed in the embellishment of those fascinating qualities which nature had profusely lavished on him. Possessed of a fine person and an excellent understanding, he had united the polish of a court, and the refinements given by education, to the heroism of a soldier. When youth adorned with such rare accomplishments is consigned prematurely to the grave, all our sensibilities are roused, and for the moment human society seems to sustain a deprivation by the melancholy stroke. In a letter written at the time by Colonel Hamilton, who in genius, in candour, and in romantic heroism, did not yield to this unfortunate Englishman, the character of André is thus feelingly and eloquently drawn: "There was something singularly interesting in the character and fortunes of André. To an excellent understanding, well

ington, replete with all the feelings of a man of sentiment and honour. But the occasion required

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improved by education and travel, he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of a pleasing person. It is said he possessed a pretty taste for the fine arts, and had himself attained some proficiency in poetry, music, and painting. His knowledge appeared without ostentation; and embellished by a diffidence that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments, which left you to suppose more than appeared. His sentiments were elevated, and inspired esteem; they had a softness that conciliated affection. His elocution was handsome; his address easy, polite, and insinuating.

"By his merit he had acquired the unlimited confidence of his general, and was making rapid progress in military rank and reputation. But in the height of his career, flushed with new hopes from the execution of a project the most beneficial to his party that could be devised, he is at once precipitated from the summit of prosperity, sees all the expectations of his ambition blasted, and himself ruined.

"The character I have given of him is drawn partly from what I saw of him myself, and partly from information. I am aware that a man of real merit is never seen in so favourable a light as through the medium of adversity. The clouds that surround him are so many shades that set off his good qualities. Misfortune cuts down little vanities, that in prosperous times serve as so many spots in his virtues, and give a tone to humanity that makes his worth more amiable. His spectators, who enjoy a happier lot, are less prone to detract from it through envy; and are much disposed by compassion to give him the credit he deserves, and perhaps even to magnify it."

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that the example should make its full impression, and his request could not be granted. He encountered his fate with composure, dignity, and fortitude; and such was his whole conduct, as to excite the admiration, and interest the feelings, of all who witnessed it.

The general officers lamented the sentence which the usages of war compelled them to pronounce; and perhaps on no occasion of his life did the commander in chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and of policy. The sympathy excited among the American officers by his fate was as universal as it is unusual on such occasions; and proclaims alike the merit of him who suffered, and the humanity of those who inflicted the punishment.

Great exertions were made by Sir Henry Clinton, to whom André was particularly dear, first to have him considered as protected by a flag of truce, and afterwards as a prisoner of war. Even Arnold had the hardihood to interpose. After giving a certificate of facts which he supposed might tend to exculpate the prisoner, exhausting his powers of reasoning on the case, and appealing to the humanity of the American general, he sought to intimidate him by stating the situation of many of the principal characters of South Carolina who had forfeited their lives, but had hitherto been spared through the clemency of the British general. This

This clemency, he said, could no longer in justice be extended to them should Major André suffer.

It may well be supposed that the interposition of Arnold was without any influence on the mind of Washington. He conveyed Mrs. Arnold to her husband in New York, and also transmitted to him his clothes and baggage for which he had written; but in every other respect, his letters, which were altogether unanswered, were also entirely unnoticed.

The mingled sentiments of admiration and compassion excited in every bosom for the unfortunate André, seemed to add fresh vigour to the detestation in which Arnold was held. "André," says General Washington in a private letter, "has met his fate with that fortitude which was to be expected from an accomplished man and a gallant officer; but I am mistaken if, at this time, Arnold is undergoing the torments of a mental hell. He wants feeling. From some traits* of his charac-

* This allusion is thus explained in a private letter from Colonel Hamilton: "This man (Arnold) is in every sense despicable. In addition to the scene of knavery and prostitution, during his command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded, the history of his command at West Point is a history of little as well as great villanies. He practised every dirty act of peculation, and even stooped to connections with the sutlers of the garrison to defraud the public."

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ter, which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in crime, so lost to all sense of honour and shame, that, while his faculties still enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse."

From motives of policy or of faith, Arnold was made a brigadier-general in the British service, which rank he preserved throughout the war. Yet it is impossible that this, or a still higher rank, could have rescued him from the contempt and detestation in which the generous, the honourable, and the brave, could not cease to hold him. It was impossible for men of this description, while obeying or acting with him, to bury the recollection of his being a traitor, a sordid traitor; first the slave of his rage, then purchased with gold, and finally secured by the blood of cover of the most accomplished officers in the Britb of army. As all men wish to preserve at least tbase appearances of honour, Arnold affected to ascribure his defection from the American cause to principle. He originally took up arms, he said, because he really believed the rights of his country endangered; and although he thought the declaration of independance precipitate, yet he was led by the many plausible arguments urged in its favour to acquiesce in it as a measure necessary to procure a redress of grievances. But the rejection of the overtures made by Great Britain in

1778,

1778, and the French alliance, had opened his eyes to the ambitious views of those who would sacrifice the happiness of their country to their own aggrandisement, and had made him a confirmed loyalist.

His representations of the discontent of the country, and of the army, concurring with reports from other quarters, had raised the expectation that the loyalists and the dissatisfied, allured by British gold and the hope of rank in the British service, would flock to his standard, and form a corps, at the head of which he might again display in the field those military qualities he had proved himself to possess.

With this hope he published an address to the inhabitants of America, in which he laboured to palliate his own guilt, and to render them dissatisfied with the existing state of things. He dilated on the motives which had induced him to join the British standard, and on all those topics which had most influence with the royalists throughout the United States. With peculiar bitterness he execrated the alliance with France, and endeavoured to revive ancient prejudices against that nation. He was profuse in his invectives against Congress and their leaders generally, whom he accused of sinister views in protracting the war at the public expence, and with general tyranny and usurpation. With these charges he artfully mingled assertions

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of their sovereign contempt for the people, particularly manifested in refusing to take their collective sentiments on the proposals offered by Great Britain.

This appeal to the public was followed by a proclamation particularly addressed "To the officers and soldiers of the continental army, who have the real interest of their country at heart, and who are determined to be no longer the tools and dupes of Congress or of France."

The object of this proclamation was to induce the officers and soldiers of the American army to desert the cause they had embraced from principle, by holding up to them very flattering terms from the British general, and contrasting the substantial emoluments of the British service with their present deplorable condition. He attempted to cover this dishonourable proposition with the garb of decency and principle, by representing the base step he invited them to take, as the only measure which could restore to their country peace, real liberty, and happiness. "You are promised liberty," he exclaims, "but is there an individual in the enjoyment of it saving your oppressors? Who among you dare speak or write what he thinks against the tyranny which has robbed you of your property, imprisons your persons, drags you to the field of battle, and is daily deluging your country with your blood?

"You

"You are flattered with independance as preferable to a redress of grievances; and for that shadow, instead of real felicity, are sunk in all the wretchedness of poverty, by the rapacity of your own rulers. Already you are disqualified to support the pride of character they taught you to aim at, and must inevitably shortly belong to one or the other of those great powers their folly and wickedness have drawn into the conflict.

"What!" he exclaims again, "is America now but a land of widows, orphans, and beggars?

"As to you who have been soldiers in the continental army, can you at this day want evidence that the funds of your country are exhausted, or that the managers have applied them to their own private uses? In either case, you surely can no longer continue in their service with honour or advantage. Yet you have hitherto been their supporters in that cruelty, which, with an equal indifference to yours, as well as to the labour and blood of others, is devouring a country that, from the moment you quit their colours, will be redeemed from their tyranny."

The terms he offered as inducements to enter into the corps which he proposed to form were highly flattering, but were attended with no effect. Although the temper of the army might be irritated by their real sufferings, and by the supposed neglect of government, no diminution of patriotism,

ism, or of zeal for the cause in which they had already sacrificed so much, had been produced.

Through all the hardships, sufferings, and irritations, of the American war, notwithstanding the almost desperate aspect which their affairs often wore, and the gloom with which their political horizon was frequently overcast, Arnold remains a solitary instance of an American officer who abandoned the side first embraced in this civil contest, and turned his sword upon his former companions in arms.

When the probable consequences of this plot, had it been successful, came to be considered; and the combination of apparent accidents, by which it was discovered and defeated, was recollected; all were filled with a kind of awful astonishment, and the devout perceived in the transaction the hand of Providence guiding America to independance.

The thanks of Congress were voted to the three militiamen * who had rendered to their country this invaluable service; and a silver medal, with an inscription expressive of their fidelity and patriotism, was directed to be presented to each of them. In addition to this flattering testimony of their worth, and as a further evidence of national

* Their names were, John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Vanwert.

gratitude,

gratitude, two hundred dollars per annum during life, to be paid in specie, or an equivalent in current money, was voted to each of them; a reward, it must be admitted, much more accurately apportioned to the poverty of the public treasury, than to the service which had been received.

The continual efforts of General Washington to obtain a permanent military force, or its best substitute, a regular system for filling the vacant ranks with draughts who should join the army on the first day of January in each year, and serve for twelve months after they should arrive in camp, have been more than once adverted to.

Notwithstanding the embarrassments with which Congress was surrounded, and the miserable system of government to which the affairs of America were then committed, it is not easy to find adequate reasons for the neglect hitherto experienced by representations so interesting, and recommendations on the success of which the public safety appeared so much to depend.

It would seem, from private letters, as if two parties still agitated Congress. The one entered fully into the views of the commander in chief; the other, jealous of the army, and apprehensive of its hostility to liberty when peace should be restored, remained unwilling to give stability to its constitution, by increasing the numbers who were to serve during the war.

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They seemed to dread less the danger from the enemy, to which its fluctuations would expose them, than the danger to the civil authority, to be apprehended from its permanent character. While these men caught with avidity at every piece of intelligence which held forth the flattering prospect of a speedy peace,* they entered reluctantly into measures proposed on the supposition that the war might yet be of long duration. Perfectly acquainted with the extent of the jealousies entertained on this subject, although, to use his own expressions to a friend, "Heaven

* The following extract of a private letter from General Washington to a member of Congress, shews how sensible he was of the mischief produced by this temper:—"The satisfaction I have in any successes that attend us, even in the alleviation of misfortunes, is always allayed by the fear that it will lull us into security. Supineness, and a disposition to flatter ourselves, seem to make parts of our national character. When we receive a check, and are not quite undone, we are apt to fancy we have gained a victory; and when we do gain any little advantage, we imagine it decisive, and expect the war immediately to end. The history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary expedients. Would to God they were to end here! This winter, if I am not mistaken, will open a still more embarrassing scene than we have yet experienced to the southward. I have little doubt, should we not gain a naval superiority, that Sir Henry Clinton will detach to the southward to extend his conquests. I am far from being satisfied that we shall be prepared to repel his attempts."

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knows how unjustly," General Washington, though his duty required that he should often recur to the importance of timely reinforcements of regular troops, had forborn to press the absolute necessity of an army for the war, so constantly, and so earnestly, as his own judgment directed. But the experience of every campaign gave such strong additional evidences of the impolicy and danger of continuing to rely on temporary expedients, and the uncertainty of collecting a force to co-operate with the auxiliaries from France was so peculiarly embarrassing, that he at length resolved to conquer the delicacy by which he had in some degree been restrained, and to open himself fully on the subject which he deemed more essential than any other to the success of the war. In August, while anxiously looking for such a reinforcement to the chevalier de Ternay as would give him the command of the American seas, and while uncertain whether the campaign might not pass away without realising a single promise made at its opening, he transmitted a letter to Congress, fully and freely imparting his sentiments to that body.

As this letter contains an exact statement of American affairs, according to the view taken of them by General Washington; and a faithful picture of the consequences of the ruinous policy which had been pursued, drawn by the man best acquainted

acquainted with them; copious extracts from it will at least be excused.

After examining the sources which might afford supplies for the present campaign, he proceeds to say: "But while we are meditating offensive operations, which may either not be undertaken at all, or being undertaken may fail, I am persuaded Congress are not inattentive to the present state of the army, and will view in the same light with me the necessity of providing in time against a period (the 1st of January) when one half of our present force will dissolve. The shadow of an army that will remain, will have every motive, except mere patriotism, to abandon the service, without the hope which has hitherto supported them of a change for the better. This is almost extinguished now; and certainly will not outlive the campaign, unless it finds something more substantial to rest upon. This is a truth of which every spectator of the distresses of the army cannot help being convinced. Those at a distance may speculate differently; but on the spot an opinion to the contrary, judging human nature on the usual scale, would be chimerical. The honourable the committee of Congress, who have seen and heard for themselves, will add their testimony to mine, and the wisdom and justice of Congress cannot fail to give it the most serious attention. To me it will appear miraculous if our affairs

affairs can maintain themselves much longer in their present train. If either the temper or the resources of the country will not admit of an alteration, we may expect soon to be reduced to the humiliating condition of seeing the cause of America, in America, upheld by foreign arms. The generosity of our allies has a claim to all our confidence, and all our gratitude; but it is neither for the honour of America, nor for the interest of the common cause, to leave the work entirely to them."

He then took a review of the resources of Great Britain; and after showing her ability still to prosecute the war, he added: "The inference from these reflections is, that we cannot count upon a speedy end to the war: and that it is the true policy of America not to content herself with temporary expedients; but to endeavour, if possible, to give consistency and solidity to our measures. An essential step to this will be immediately to devise a plan, and put it in execution, for providing men in time to replace those who will leave us at the end of the year, and for subsisting and for making a reasonable allowance to the officers and soldiers.

"The plan for this purpose ought to be of general operation, and such as will execute itself. Experience has shown that a peremptory draft will be the only effectual one. If a draft for the

war

war or for three years can be effected, it ought to be made on every account; a shorter period than a year is inadmissible.

"To one who has been witness to the evils brought upon us by short enlistments, the system appears to have been pernicious beyond description; and a crowd of motives present themselves to dictate a change. It may easily be shown, that all the misfortunes we have met with in the military line, are to be attributed to this cause. Had we formed a permanent army in the beginning, which, by the continuance of the same men in service, would be capable of discipline, we never should have had to retreat with a handful of men across the Delaware in 1776, trembling for the fate of America, which nothing but the infatuation of the enemy could have saved; we should not have remained all the succeeding winter at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the ordinary guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated, if they had only thought proper to march against us; we should not have been under the necessity of fighting at Brandywine, with an unequal number of raw troops, and afterwards of seeing Philadelphia fall a prey to a victorious army; we should not have been at Valley Forge, with less than half the force of the enemy, destitute of every thing, in a situation neither to resist nor to retire; we should not have

seen New York left with a handful of men, yet an over-match for the main army of these states, while the principal part of their force was detached for the reduction of two of them; we should not have found ourselves this spring so weak as to be insulted by five thousand men, unable to protect our baggage and magazines, their security depending on a good countenance, and a want of enterprise in the enemy; we should not have been the greatest part of the war inferior to the enemy, indebted for our safety to their inactivity, enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunities to ruin them, pass unimproved for want of a force which the country was completely able to afford; to see the country ravaged, our towns burnt, the inhabitants plundered, abused, murdered with impunity, from the same cause."

After presenting in detail to the view of Congress the multiplied embarrassments under which the civil department also had laboured, in consequence of the expensiveness and waste inseparable from temporary armies, he proceeded to observe: —"There is every reason to believe the war has been protracted on this account. Our opposition being less, made the successes of the enemy greater.

"The fluctuation of the army kept alive their hopes; and at every period of the dissolution of a considerable part of it, they have flattered themselves

selves with some decisive advantages. Had we kept a permanent army on foot, the enemy could have had nothing to hope for, and would in all probability have listened to terms long since.

"If the army is left in its present situation, it must continue an encouragement to the efforts of the enemy: if it is put into a respectable one, it must have a contrary effect; and nothing, I believe, will tend more to give us peace the ensuing winter.

"It will be an interesting winter. Many circumstances will contribute to a negotiation. An army on foot, not only for another campaign, but for several campaigns, would determine the enemy to pacific measures, and enable us to insist upon favourable terms, in forcible language. An army insignificant in numbers, dissatisfied, crumbling to pieces, would be the strongest temptation they could have to try the experiment a little longer. It is an old maxim, that the surest way to make a good peace, is to be well prepared for war.

"I cannot forbear returning in this place to the necessity of a more ample and equal provision for the army. The discontents on this head have been gradually matured to a dangerous extremity. There are many symptoms that alarm and distress me.

"Endeavours are using to unite both officers and men in a general refusal of the money; and

some corps now actually decline receiving it. Every method has been taken to counteract it, because such a combination in the army would be a severe blow to our declining currency. The most moderate insist, that the accounts of depreciation ought to be liquidated at stated periods, and certificates given by government for the sums due. They will not be satisfied with a general declaration that it shall be made good.

"I have often said, and I beg leave to repeat it, the half-pay provision is in my opinion the most politic and effectual that can be adopted. On the whole, if something satisfactory be not done, the army (already so much reduced in officers by daily resignations, as not to have a sufficiency to do the common duties of it) must either cease to exist at the end of the campaign, or it will exhibit an example of more virtue, fortitude, self-denial, and perseverance, than has perhaps ever yet been paralleled in the history of human enthusiasm.

"The dissolution of the army is an event that cannot be regarded with indifference. It would bring accumulated distresses upon us; it would throw the people of America into a general consternation; it would discredit our cause throughout the world; it would shock our allies. To think of replacing the officers with others is visionary. The loss of the veteran soldiers could not be repaired. To attempt to carry on the war with militia

militia against disciplined troops, would be to attempt what the common sense and common experience of mankind will pronounce to be impracticable. But I should fail in respect to Congress, to dwell on observations of this kind in a letter to them."

At length the committee presented their report reorganizing the regiments, reducing their number, and apportioning on the several states their respective quotas to complete the establishment. This report, being approved by Congress, was forwarded to the commander in chief for his consideration. By this arrangement, the states were required to recruit their quotas for the war, and to bring them into the field by the first of January; but if, in any state, it should be found impracticable to raise the men for the war by the first day of December, it was then recommended to such state to supply the deficiency with men engaged to serve for not less than one year.

The most strenuous efforts were ineffectually made by the friends of a permanent force, to exclude or modify this alternative. In spite of their exertions, it was retained in the form reported by the committee.

In compliance with the request of Congress, General Washington submitted to them, in a very long and respectful letter, his numerous objections to the plan proposed. The numbers required were not,

not, in his opinion, sufficient for the objects of the campaign; and to remedy this defect, he recommended not that the number of regiments, but that the number of men in each regiment, should be increased.

"In the place of regiments entirely of cavalry, he recommended that legionary corps should be substituted: because the kind of service to which horse could be applied in the American war required the aid of infantry; and because, being generally compelled by the difficulty of obtaining forage, to quarter in places remote from the army, infantry would be indispensable for their security. It would conduce, he thought, much more to the public service, and be subject to much less inconvenience, that the infantry attached to the cavalry should compose permanently a part of the corps, than that it should be occasionally drawn from the regiments of foot.

"The reduction of the number of regiments appeared to him a subject of great delicacy. That there were the most conclusive reasons for it, no person acquainted with the state of public affairs could deny. The want of officers alone was sufficient to compel it. But that the temper of the army, produced by its sufferings, required great caution in any reforms to be attempted, was a position not less true than the former. In services the best established, where the hands of govern-

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ment were strengthened by the strongest interest impelling the army to submission, the reducing its regiments, and dismissing many of its officers, was always a measure of delicacy and difficulty. In the American army, where no such interests existed, it was peculiarly so.

" The last reduction, he said, had occasioned many to quit the service, independent of those who were discontinued, and had left durable seeds of discontent among those who remained. The general topic of declamation was, that it was as hard as dishonourable for men who had made every sacrifice to the service, to be turned out of it at the pleasure of those in power without an adequate compensation. In the maturity to which their uneasiness had now arisen from a continuance of misery, they would be still more impatient under an attempt of a similar nature.

" How far these dispositions might be reasonable, he pretended not to decide; but in the extremity to which their affairs had arrived, policy forbade them to add new irritations.

" It was not, he said, the intention of his remarks to discourage a reform; but to shew the necessity of guarding against the ill effects which might otherwise attend it, by making an ample provision both for the officers who should remain in the service, and for those who should be reduced. This should be the basis of the plan; and without it the

most mischievous consequences were to be apprehended. He was aware of the difficulty of making a present provision sufficiently ample to give satisfaction; but this only proved the expediency of making one for the future, and brought him to that which he had so frequently recommended as the most œconomical, the most politic, and the most effectual, that could be devised: this was half-pay for life. Supported by the prospect of a permanent provision, the officers would be tied to the service; and would submit to many momentary privations, and to those inconveniences which the situation of public affairs rendered unavoidable.

"If the objection drawn from the principle that the measure was incompatible with the genius of the government would be thought insurmountable, he could propose a substitute less eligible in his opinion, but which would answer the purpose; it was to make the present half-pay for seven years, whole pay for the same period. He also recommended that depreciation on the pay received should be made up to the officers who should be reduced.

"No objection occurred to the measure now recommended, but the expence it would occasion. In his judgment, whatever would give consistency to the military establishment, would be ultimately favourable to œconomy. It was not easy, he said,

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to be conceived, except by those who had witnessed it, what an additional waste and increased consumption of every thing, and consequently what an increase of expence, resulted from laxity of discipline in an army; and where officers thought they did the public a favour by holding their commissions, and the men were continually fluctuating, to maintain discipline was impossible.

"Nothing could be more obvious to him, than that a sound military establishment, and real œconomy, were the same. That the purposes of war would be greatly promoted by it, was too clear to admit of argument. He objected also to the mode proposed for effecting the reduction. This was, by leaving it to the several states to select the officers who should remain in service. He regretted that Congress had not thought proper to retain under their own direction the reduction and incorporation of the regiments. He regretted that it should be left to the states, not only because it was an adherence to the state system which, in the arrangements of the army, he disapproved; but because also he feared it would introduce much confusion and discontent in a business which ought to be conducted with the greatest circumspection. He feared also the professing to *select* the officers retained in service, would give disgust both to those who should be discontinued, and to those who should remain. The former would be sent away

away, under the public stigma of inferior merit; and the latter would feel no pleasure in a present preference, when they reflected that at some future period they might experience a similar fate.

"He wished with much sincerity, he said, that Congress had been pleased to make no alteration in the term of service; but had confined their requisition to men who should serve for the war, to be raised by enlistment, draught, or assessment, as might be found necessary: as it now stood, there would be very few men for the war, and all the evils of temporary engagements would still be felt. In the present temper of the states, he entertained the most flattering hopes that they would enter on vigorous measures to raise an army for the war, if Congress appeared decided respecting it; but if they held up a different idea as admissible, it would be again concluded that they did not think an army for the war essential. This would encourage the opposition of men of narrow, interested, and feeble tempers, and enable them to defeat the primary object of the resolution."

This letter was taken into consideration; and in almost every particular the measures it recommended were pursued. Even the two great principles which were viewed with most jealousy and apprehension, an army entirely for the war, and half-pay for life, were adopted. It would have greatly abridged the calamities of America, could these

these resolutions have been carried into execution. Every effort for the purpose was made by the commander in chief. To his friends in the several states he urged the vast importance of raising a permanent army, not only to the speedy, but to the happy termination of the war. And to the respective state governments he recapitulated all those arguments which had been so repeatedly pressed on them; directed their attention to the many calamities which had resulted from trusting the defence of their liberties to a temporary force; and declared his solemn conviction, that great danger was still to be apprehended from pursuing so fatal a system.

To place the officers of the army in a situation which would render their commissions valuable; and hold out to them the prospect of a comfortable old age, in a country saved by their blood, their sufferings, and the labours of their best years; and thus to rescue from the contempt and misery too often attendant on poverty, men who had devoted their prime of life, and many of whom had employed their little all, in the service of the public; was an object which had always been dear to the heart of the commander in chief. Sound policy, real justice, and affection for men whose sufferings he had witnessed, and whose merits he prized, all combined to place the establishment of this principle among the first of his desires. He had seized every

every opportunity to press it on Congress. That body had approached it slowly; taking with apparent reluctance step after step, as the necessity of the measure became more and more obvious.

The first resolution on the subject passed in May, 1778. This allowed to all military officers who should continue in service during the war, and not hold any office of profit under the United States or any of them, half-pay for seven years, if they lived so long. At the same time a reward of eighty dollars, in addition to his pay, was granted to every non-commissioned officer and soldier who should serve to the end of the war. In 1779 this subject was again taken up: and, after much debate, its further consideration was postponed, and the officers and soldiers were recommended to the attention of their several states; with a declaration that their patriotism, valour, and perseverance in defence of the rights and liberties of their country, had entitled them to the gratitude as well as the approbation of their fellow-citizens.

In 1780, a memorial from the general officers, depicting in strong terms the situation of the army, and requiring present support and some future provision, was answered by a reference to what had been already done, and a declaration "that patience, self-denial, fortitude, and perseverance, and the cheerful sacrifice of time and health, are necessary virtues, which both the citizen and soldier

soldier are called to exercise, while struggling for the liberties of their country; and that moderation, frugality and temperance, must be among the chief supports, as well as the brightest ornaments, of that kind of civil government which is wisely instituted by the several states in this union."

It may well be supposed that this philosophic lecture on the virtues of temperance, to men who were often without food, and nearly half their time with a very limited supply of it, was but ill calculated to assuage the irritations fomented by the neglect which was believed to have been sustained.

In a few days afterwards, this subject was again brought before Congress, when a temper of greater conciliation was manifested. The odious restriction on the half-pay for seven years, by which it was limited to those who should hold no post of profit under the United States or any of them, was taken off; and the bounty allowed the men was extended to the widows and orphans of those who had died or should die in the service. At length the vote passed which has been stated, allowing half-pay for life to all those who should serve in the armies of the United States to the end of the war.

Resolutions were also passed, recommending it to the several states to make up the depreciation on the pay which had been received by the army; and

and it was determined that their future services should be compensated in the money of the new emission, the value of which it was supposed might be kept up by taxes and by loans.

While the government of the union was thus employed in measures essential to the preservation of its military establishment, the time for action passed away without furnishing any material event. The hostile armies continued, however, to watch each other, till the season of the year forced them out of the field.

Just before retiring into winter quarters, a handsome enterprise, though on a small scale, was planned and executed by Major Talmadge, of Colonel Sheldon's regiment of light dragoons. This gentleman had been generally stationed on the lines, on the east side of the North river; and had been particularly distinguished for the accuracy of his intelligence, and the skill employed in obtaining it.

He was informed of a large magazine of forage collected at Coram on Long Island, protected only by the militia of the country, the cruizers in the Sound, and a small garrison in its neighbourhood, stationed in fort St. George on South Haven.

With a detachment of eighty dismounted dragoons, under the command of Captain Edgar, and eight or ten who were mounted, he passed the Sound on the 21st of November, where it was upwards

upwards of twenty miles over. He then marched across the island in the night, and so completely surprised the fort, that his troops entered the works on three different sides, before the garrison was prepared to resist them. The British took refuge in two houses connected with the fortification, and commenced a fire from the doors and windows. These were instantly forced open; and except seven killed and wounded, the whole party, amounting to fifty-four, among whom were a lieutenant-colonel, captain, and subaltern, were made prisoners. Stores to a considerable amount in the fort and in a vessel lying in South Haven, were destroyed; the fort was demolished, and the magazines at Coram were consumed by fire.

The objects of the expedition being thus completely effected, Major Talmadge recrossed the Sound without having lost a single man.

Although this expedition was by no means important for its magnitude, yet those employed on it had manifested so much address and courage in its execution, that the general recommended them to the particular attention of Congress, who passed a resolution expressing the high sense entertained of their merit.

No objects for enterprise presenting themselves, the troops were, early in December, withdrawn into winter-quarters. The Pennsylvania line was stationed near Morristown; the Jersey line about Pompton,

Pompton, on the confines of New York and New Jersey; and the troops belonging to the New England states in West Point, and in its vicinity, on both sides the North river.

The line of the state of New York remained at Albany, to which place it had been detached for the purpose of opposing an invasion from Canada.

Major Carlton, at the head of one thousand men, composed of Europeans, Indians, and tories, had made a sudden irruption into the northern parts of New York, where he took forts Anne and George, and made their garrisons prisoners. At the same time Sir John Johnson, at the head of a body of men, also composed of Europeans, Indians, and tories, appeared on the Mohawk. Several sharp skirmishes were fought in that quarter with the continental troops, and a regiment of new levies, aided by the militia of the country. General Clinton's brigade was ordered to their assistance; but before he could reach the scene of action, the invading armies had retired, after laying waste the whole country through which they passed.

While the disorder of the American finances, the exhausted state of the country, and the debility of the government, kept alive the hopes of conquest, and determined the British crown to persevere in offensive war against the United States, Europe assumed an aspect not less formidable to the permanent grandeur of England than

than hostile to its present views. In the summer of 1780, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, entered into the celebrated compact which has been generally denominated THE ARMED NEUTRALITY; the principal objects of which were, to reduce the list of articles which should be deemed contraband; and to impart to goods the character of the bottom which conveyed them. Holland had also manifested unequivocally a determination to accede to the same confederacy; and it is not improbable that this measure contributed, in no inconsiderable degree, to the declaration of war which was made by Great Britain against that power towards the close of the present year.

The long and intimate friendship which had existed between these two nations, had been visibly impaired from the commencement of the American war. Although not concurring with the house of Bourbon in the wish to weaken a rival, Holland yielded to neither France nor Spain in the desire of participating in that commerce, which the independance of America would open to the world. From the commencement of hostilities, therefore, the merchants of Holland, and especially of the great commercial city of Amsterdam, watched with anxiety the progress of the war, and engaged in speculations which were profitable to themselves, and at the same time beneficial to the United States. The remonstrances made by

the British minister at the Hague against this conduct, were answered in the most amicable manner by the government; but the practice of individuals remained the same.

When the war broke out between France and England, a great number of Dutch vessels trading with France, laden with materials for ship-building, were seized and carried into the ports of Great Britain, although the existing treaties between the two nations were understood to exclude those articles from the list of contraband of war. Attributing these acts of violence to the necessity of her situation, Great Britain persisted in refusing to permit naval stores to be carried to her enemy in neutral bottoms. This refusal, however, was accompanied with friendly professions, with an offer to pay for the vessels and cargoes already seized, and with proposals to form new stipulations for the future regulation of that commerce.

The states-general refused to enter into any negotiations for modifying the subsisting treaties; and the merchants of all the great trading towns of Holland, and especially those of Amsterdam, expressed the utmost indignation at the injuries they had sustained.

In consequence of this conduct, the British government required those succours which had been stipulated in ancient treaties, and insisted that the *casus fœderis* had now occurred. Advantage was taken

taken of the refusal of the states-general to comply with this demand, to declare the treaties between the two nations at an end.

It may well be supposed that the temper produced by this state of things was favourable to the comprehending of Holland in the treaty for an armed neutrality, and that the Dutch government was well disposed to enter into it. They acceded to it in November; yet some unknown causes prevented the actual signature of the treaty on the part of the states-general, till a circumstance occurred which was used for the purpose of placing them in a situation not to avail themselves of the aid they would otherwise have been entitled to as a member of that confederacy.

While Mr. Lee, one of the ministers of the United States, was on his mission to the courts of Vienna and Berlin, he fell in company with Mr. John de Neufville, a merchant of Amsterdam, with whom he held several conversations on the subject of a commercial intercourse between the two nations; the result of which was, that the plan of an eventual commercial treaty was sketched out, as one which might subsequently be concluded between them. This paper had received the approbation of the pensionary Van Berkel, and the city of Amsterdam, but not of the states-general.

Mr. Henry Laurens, late president of Congress, was deputed to the states-general with this plan of

a treaty, for the double purpose of endeavouring to complete it, and of negotiating a loan for the use of his government. On his voyage he was captured by a British frigate; and his papers, which he had previously thrown overboard, were rescued from the waves by the skill and courage of a British sailor. Among these papers, which were preserved for the minister, was found the plan of a treaty which has been mentioned. This was immediately transmitted to Sir Joseph Yorke, the British minister at the Hague, to be laid before the Dutch government.

The explanations of this transaction not being deemed satisfactory by the court of London, Sir Joseph Yorke received orders to withdraw from the Hague; soon after which war was declared against Holland.

The bold measure which added one of the first maritime powers in Europe to the formidable list of enemies with which the British nation was already encompassed, was perhaps more justifiable in point of prudence than might at first view be imagined.

There may be situations to which only high-minded nations are equal: where a daring policy will conduct those who adopt it safely through the very dangers it appears to invite; dangers, which a system suggested by a timid caution might multiply instead of avoiding.

The

The present was probably one of those situations. Holland was about to engage as a member of the armed neutrality: the consequence of which must have been, either that her immense navigation would be employed, without molestation, in the transportation of the property of the enemies of Britain, and in supplying them with all the materials for ship-building, and of renewing their fleets; or that, by an attempt to prevent it, the whole confederacy would be encountered.

However this may be, America received with delight the intelligence that Holland also was engaged in the war, and founded on that event additional hopes of its speedy termination.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

Transactions in South Carolina and Georgia—Defeat of Ferguson—Lord Cornwallis enters North Carolina—Retreats out of that State—Major Wemys attacks and is defeated by Sumpter—Greene appointed to the command of the Southern Army—Arrives in Camp—Detaches Morgan over the Catawba—Battle of the Cowpens—Pursuit of the American Army through North Carolina into Virginia—Lord Cornwallis retires to Hillsborough—Greene recrosses the Dann—Party of Loyalists commanded by Colonel Pyle cut to pieces—Battle of Guilford—Lord Cornwallis retires to Ramsay's Mills, and afterwards to Wilmington—Greene advances to Ramsay's Mills, with a determination to enter South Carolina—Lord Cornwallis resolves to march to Virginia.

IN the south, where interests of the utmost magnitude were to be decided by armies consisting of a few diminished regiments; and where the fate of an immense extent of valuable country depended on battles which, in European wars, would be deemed skirmishes almost too inconsiderable for the notice of history; Lord Cornwallis, after having nearly demolished the American army at Camden, found himself under the necessity of suspending,

suspending, for a few weeks, the new career of conquest on which he had intended to enter. His army was much enfeebled by sickness, as well as by action; and the intense heat of the weather was scarcely supportable. He had not brought from Charlestown those stores which were deemed necessary for the meditated expedition; and a temper so hostile to the British interest had lately discovered itself in South Carolina, that it appeared unsafe to withdraw any considerable part of his present force from that state, till he should have subdued the spirit of insurrection against his authority which had been extensively displayed.

The exertions of Sumpter in the North-west have already been noticed. In other parts of the state, similar efforts were made. Colonel Marion, a valuable officer, had been compelled by the wounds which he received in Charlestown during the siege of that place, to retire into the country. With Sumpter he had been promoted by Governor Rutledge to the rank of a brigadier-general: and as the army of Gates approached South Carolina, he had entered the north-eastern parts of that state with only sixteen men; had penetrated into the country as far as the Santee; and was successfully rousing the inhabitants to arms, when the defeat of the 16th of August chilled the growing spirit of resistance which he had contributed to increase.

With

With the small force he had collected, he rescued about one hundred and fifty continental troops, who had been captured at Camden, and were on their way to Charlestown. Though compelled for a short time to leave the state, he soon returned to it, and at the head of a few spirited men made repeated excursions from the swamps and marshes in which he concealed himself, and skirmished successfully against the militia who joined the British standard, and the small parties of British regulars by whom they were occasionally supported.

His talents as a partisan were so great, that he eluded every attempt to seize him; and such was his humanity, as well as respect for the laws, that no violence or outrage of any sort was ever attributed to the party under his command.

The interval between the victory of the 16th of August and the expedition into North Carolina, was employed in quelling what was termed the spirit of revolt in South Carolina, which Lord Cornwallis seems to have considered as a conquered province, reduced completely under allegiance to its ancient sovereign. Their efforts to re-establish their independance seem to have been considered as new acts of rebellion; and a degree of severity was used towards them, policy which was supposed to dictate, but which certainly gave a new and keener edge to the resentments which civil discord

cord never fails to engender. Several of the most active militiamen, who had taken protections as British subjects, and engaged in the British militia, having been afterwards found in arms, and made prisoners at Camden, were executed as traitors. Orders to proceed in the same manner against persons of a similar description were given to the officers commanding at Augusta in Georgia, and at different posts in South Carolina, and were in many instances carried into execution. A proclamation was issued conformable to directions perviously given, for sequestrating the estates, both real and personal, of all those inhabitants of the province who were actually in arms with the Americans, or who had abandoned their plantations to join or support them; of all those, not included in the capitulation of Charlestown, who were in the service, or acting under the authority, of Congress; and of all those who, by an open avowal of what were termed rebellious principles, or by other notorious acts, should manifest a wicked and desperate perseverance in opposing the re-establishment of the royal authority.

While taking these measures to break the spirit of independance, Lord Cornwallis was indefatigable in urging his preparations for the expedition into North Carolina.

The day after the battle of Camden, emissaries had been dispatched into that state, where it was supposed

supposed the royalists might now assemble without danger, for the purpose of inviting the friends of the British government to take up arms, and to seize the most violent of their enemies, as well as the magazines and stores which might have been collected for the use of the Americans. These emissaries also carried with them assurances, that the British army would, without loss of time, march to their support.

Meanwhile, the utmost exertions were continued to embody the people of the country as a British militia; and Major Ferguson, a partisan of distinguished merit, was employed in the district of Ninety-six, to train the most loyal inhabitants, and to attach them to his own corps, from which important services were expected.*

To keep up the spirits of the royalists in the back parts of North Carolina, and to embody them for co-operation with his army, Lord Cornwallis directed Major Ferguson to enter the western part of that state near the mountains. He was ordered to hazard nothing; but immediately to inform his lordship if an enemy, from whom any apprehension could be entertained, should approach him.

The route marked out for the main army was from Camden, through the settlement of the

* Stedman.

Waxhaws,

Waxhaws, to Charlotte-town in North Carolina. The legion of Tarleton was to keep open the communication between Ferguson and Lord Cornwallis, and between the tory settlements on Cross Creek and in what had been denominated Tryon county.

Lord Cornwallis moved from Camden on the 8th of September. He reached Charlotte late in that month, and took possession of it after a slight resistance.* At that place he designed to establish a post, in order to keep up his communication with Camden; and then too he expected to be rejoined by Ferguson.

In attempting to reach that place, Ferguson was arrested by an event alike unlooked for and important.

Among the inhabitants who abandoned their homes when the British took possession of the two Southern States, was a Colonel Clarke of Georgia. This gentleman had formed a plan for the reduction of Augusta, which was only defended by a few provincials under the command of Colonel Brown. About the time Lord Cornwallis commenced his march from Camden to Charlotte,

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* General Davidson commanded the North Carolina militia, and occasionally harassed the British army in its route. The resistance in Charlotte was made by Colonel Davie, at the head of some volunteer militia cavalry.

Clarke

Clarke advanced against Augusta, at the head of a small body of men whom he had collected in the frontiers of North and South Carolina, and laid siege to that place. Brown made a vigorous defence; and the approach of Colonel Cruger, with a reinforcement from Ninety-six, compelled Clarke to relinquish the enterprize, and to save himself by a rapid retreat through the country along which he had marched to the attack. It was supposed that he would find much difficulty in effecting his escape; and as the position of Ferguson was well calculated to favour the designs against him, intelligence of the transactions at Augusta was immediately given to that officer. It appearing impossible that any enemy could be near him, Ferguson readily adopted the proposition for intercepting Clarke. For that purpose he moved somewhat nearer the mountains, and remained longer in that country, than had been originally intended. This delay proved fatal to him. It gave an opportunity to several corps voluntarily formed in different parts of the country, with various objects, and under various leaders, to assemble together, and thus to constitute a force too formidable to be resisted. The hardy mountaineers inhabiting the extreme western parts of Virginia, and of North Carolina, assembled on horseback, with their rifles, under Colonels Campbell, Cleveland, Shelby, and Sevier; and moved with

with their accustomed velocity towards Ferguson. At the same time, Colonel Williams, a distinguished militia partisan from the neighbourhood of Ninety-six, and Colonels Tracey and Branan, also of South Carolina, conducted their several parties towards the same point. Ferguson had notice of their approach, and immediately commenced his march for Charlotte, dispatching at the same time different messengers to Lord Cornwallis with information of his danger. These messengers were intercepted on their way, so that no movement was made to favour his retreat.

These several corps of American militia, amounting to near three thousand men, met at Gilbert-town, the place lately occupied by Ferguson. About sixteen hundred choice riflemen were immediately selected, and mounted on their best horses, for the purpose of following the retreating enemy. The pursuit was too rapid to render an escape practicable. Finding that he must inevitably be overtaken, Ferguson chose his ground, and waited on King's-mountain for the attack.

On the 7th of October the Americans came up, and immediately forming themselves into three divisions, led by Campbell, Shelby, and Cleveland, began to ascend the mountain in three different and opposite directions. Colonel Cleveland first reached the enemy, and immediately commenced the action. An impetuous charge was made on him

him with the bayonet, and his regiment gave way; but before it could be dispersed, Shelby also came up, and poured in a heavy fire on the British troops. Against him in turn the bayonet was used with success; but before the advantage gained could be pressed so far as to be of any material consequence, a new enemy presented himself, and called the attention of Ferguson to another quarter. Campbell had now brought up his division, and commenced a dreadful fire from a different part of the hill. Ferguson again used the bayonet with its accustomed success; but both the corps which had before been repulsed had now returned to the charge, and kept up on all sides, from behind the trees, a very galling fire. The action was continued in this manner with great spirit for near an hour. Wherever the bayonet was applied, the assailants necessarily gave way; but the attack was at the same time pressed from other quarters. In this critical state of things Major Ferguson received a mortal wound, and instantly expired. The courage of his party fell with him. The second in command was unable to maintain the conflict, and quarter was immediately demanded.

In this sharp action one hundred and fifty of Ferguson's party were killed on the spot, and about the same number were wounded; eight hundred and ten, of whom one hundred were British troops, surrendered themselves prisoners; and fifteen

fifteen hundred stand of excellent arms were taken.

The loss on the part of the Americans was inconsiderable. The nature of the action often exposed the enemy in open view to their fire, while they were themselves covered by the trees, behind which they took shelter; but among the slain was Colonel Williams, who was greatly and justly lamented. As cruelty generally begets cruelty, the example set by the British at Camden was followed; and immediately after the action, ten of the most active among the tories were selected from the prisoners and hung upon the spot.

The party commanded by Ferguson is understood to have amounted to fourteen hundred men. Those who were neither killed nor taken dispersed themselves through the country, so that they were all lost to the royal cause. The total destruction of so important a part of his force entirely changed the situation of Lord Cornwallis. It disabled him from further prosecuting his expedition against North Carolina, and inspired him with serious fears for the posts in his rear. Could the victorious mountaineers have pressed their advantage, the situation of his lordship, and of all the posts in the upper parts of South Carolina and Georgia, would have been extremely critical. But it was impossible to keep them embodied. Had they been willing to remain in the field, no means

for

for subsisting them had been prepared. Of consequence, after having accomplished the great object of destroying the enemy who had approached their neighbourhood, they dispersed, and returned to their several homes.

In the perfect confidence of being joined by Ferguson, Lord Cornwallis had advanced from Charlotte towards Salisbury, and had ordered the militia to cross the Yadkin; but on being assured of the disaster which had befallen this corps, he returned immediately to Charlotte, and soon afterwards commenced his retreat out of North Carolina.

After a fortnight of incessant fatigue, the British army reached Wynnsborough, an intermediate post between Camden and Ninety-six. At that place it was resolved to wait for reinforcements which were expected from New York. The victory obtained on the 16th of August having suggested views of more extensive conquest in the south, Sir Henry Clinton had determined, as soon as the departure of the Count de Guichen for Europe relieved him from all immediate apprehensions of danger to himself, to make a considerable detachment for the purpose of reinforcing the southern army. In the opinion that Lord Cornwallis could meet with no effectual opposition in the Carolinas, and that his views would be best promoted by a diversion in Virginia, where a junction of the whole force designed to operate in

in the south might probably be formed, the reinforcement destined for the southern army was directed, in the first instance, to enter the Chesapeak, and to take possession of the lower parts of that state: after which the officer commanding it was to follow the orders he should receive from Lord Cornwallis, to whom a copy of his instructions had been forwarded before he sailed from the Hook.

The detachment consisted of between two thousand five hundred and three thousand men, who were commanded by General Leslie. It sailed on the 16th of October; and entering James river, after a short passage, took possession of the country on the south side as high as Suffolk. After some time they drew in their out-posts, and began to fortify Portsmouth, which it was supposed they were determined to hold, and to render defensible.

The few regular troops remaining in the state were retained for its defence, and considerable numbers of militia were embodied for the same purpose. But while every appearance indicated a permanent invasion, General Leslie received orders from Lord Cornwallis, in consequence of the defeat of Ferguson, to repair to Charlestown by water: on which he suddenly re-embarked his troops, and put to sea.

While Cornwallis waited at Winnsborough for the arrival of the reinforcement conducted by

Leslie, the light troops of his army were employed in endeavouring to suppress the parties which were rising in various quarters of the country in opposition to his authority. Marion, though his followers seldom exceeded two hundred, and were often reduced to less than fifty men, had become so formidable as to endanger the communication between Camden and Charlestown, and was thought of sufficient importance for Tarleton and his legion to be detached against him. Unable to encounter an enemy so much superior in numbers, Marion was under the necessity of concealing himself in the swamps; and Tarleton, being unable to allure him from his retreat, or to accomplish the primary object of his expedition, took his revenge upon the country. The adjacent settlements, with the provision necessary for the use of the inhabitants, were almost entirely destroyed, and many individuals treated with extreme severity. He was, however, unable to effect the destruction of Marion; and was soon called from this scene of devastation into a different quarter, where an enemy, supposed to be entirely vanquished, had reappeared in considerable force.

Sumpter had again assembled a respectable body of mounted militia, at the head of which he advanced towards the posts occupied by the British, and for some time restrained their foraging-parties from Camden. On receiving intelligence of his approach,

approach, Earl Cornwallis formed a plan for surprising him in his camp on Broad river, the execution of which was committed to Major Wemyss. That officer marched from Winnsborough at the head of the sixty-third regiment mounted, and about forty dragoons of the legion cavalry. He reached his place of destination several hours before day, and immediately charged the out-piquet, which made but a slight resistance: only five shot are said to have been fired, but from these Wemyss received two dangerous wounds, which disabled him from the further performance of his duty. The command is stated to have devolved on a young lieutenant, unacquainted with the plan, the ground, or the strength to be encountered. All was confusion; and Sumpter having formed his troops, the British were repulsed, and retired with the loss of their commanding officer, and about twenty men. After this action Sumpter crossed Broad river, and, having formed a junction with Clarke and Brannan, threatened Ninety-six.

Alarmed for the safety of that post, Earl Cornwallis dispatched an express to recall Tarleton, with the light troops, from the eastern parts of the state; and with orders for him to proceed by the nearest route against Sumpter. The sixty-third regiment was sent forward to join him on his march; and the seventy-first was advanced to

Bryersly's ferry, for the purpose of supporting him.

Sumpter had approached Ninety-six, in the confidence that the light troops were still employed in the eastern parts of the state; and such was the rapidity of the movement made by Colonel Tarleton, that he had nearly gained the rear of his enemy before notice of his return was received. In the night preceding the day on which he was expected to effect his purpose, by marching up the banks of the Ennoree, a deserter apprised Sumpter of the designs entertained against him, and that officer immediately began his retreat. The next morning Tarleton received information of this retrograde movement, and with his usual celerity commenced a pursuit. At a ford on the Ennoree he came up with, and cut to pieces, a part of the rear guard, which was waiting for the return of a patrole, and continued his march with as much rapidity as was practicable without separating his cavalry from his infantry.

The rapid river Tyger runs across the route which Sumpter had taken, after passing which he would be in a state of security. It was perceived in the afternoon that this could not be prevented without changing the plan of pursuit. Leaving the infantry therefore to follow him at their own pace, Tarleton determined to press forward with his cavalry, and a small part of the sixty-third, which

which was mounted, making together two hundred and fifty men.*

After a rapid pursuit of about an hour, he came within view of Sumpter, who had reached the banks of the Tyger, and who, having received notice of the approach of the enemy by the firing of his vedettes, had posted his troops to great advantage. The main body was drawn up on a steep eminence, having their rear and part of their right flank secured by the river Tyger, and their left covered by a long barn, into which a considerable number of men were thrown, who could fire in security through the apertures between the logs. A small rivulet ran along the foot of the hill, at the margin of which was a good deal of brushwood, and a railed fence, occupied by light parties, who were placed there for the purpose of skirmishing with the cavalry as they advanced.

With a degree of rashness, which only a mistaken confidence in the timidity of those he was about to attack could have occasioned, Tarleton, without waiting for his infantry, or a field-piece left with them in his rear, rushed with his usual impetuosity to the charge.

* In the report of this action made by Colonel Middleton, the assailants are stated at five hundred men; but it is supposed that their force was better known to the British general, from whose account this is taken.

After

After several successive and ineffectual attempts to dislodge the Americans, he was entirely repulsed; and his troops retired from the field with great precipitation and disorder, leaving on the ground ninety-two dead, and one hundred wounded. The remainder of them continued their flight till they met the infanty, who were advancing to support them.

After retaining possession of the ground for several hours, Sumpter, who was severely wounded in the action, and who knew that Tarleton would be reinforced in the night, crossed the Tyger; after which his troops dispersed. His loss in this engagement was only three killed, and four wounded.

Availing themselves of the subsequent retreat and dispersion of the American militia, the English denominated this severe check a victory; while Congress, in a public resolution, voted their thanks to General Sumpter and the militia under his command, for this and other important services which they had rendered.

The shattered remains of the army defeated at Camden had been slowly collected at Hillsborough, and great activity was used in re-organizing and reinforcing it. A letter, not received till after the 16th of August, had been addressed to the Baron de Kalb by General Washington, instructing him to consolidate the regiments of the

Maryland

Maryland and Delaware lines, and to detach the supernumerary officers to their respective states, to hasten the business of recruiting, and to take charge of the recruits, whom they were to discipline, equip, and prepare for immediate service.

In pursuance of these instructions, those lines were reduced to one strong regiment, to be commanded by Colonel Otho H. Williams, to which was annexed a company of light infantry. The remaining officers, except Smallwood, who was retained in order to command a division of the army about to be formed, were placed under the direction of General Gist, and dispatched to their respective states for the purposes suggested in the letter of the commander in chief. Some regulars, which had not before joined the army, came on from Virginia; and the whole number of continental troops under the command of Gates amounted to about fourteen hundred men.

North Carolina had called out the second division of its militia, under Generals Davidson and Sumner, who were joined by the volunteer cavalry under Colonel Davie, and had advanced to the southern confines of their state before it was entered by Lord Cornwallis.

On receiving intelligence that Lord Cornwallis had occupied Charlotte, Gates detached Smallwood to the Yadkin, with directions to post himself on the ford of that river, and to take command

mand of all the troops of every description in that quarter of the country. The more effectually to harass the enemy, a light corps was selected from the army, and placed under the command of Morgan; who, to prevent injurious contests concerning command with the militia generals who might occasionally act with him, as well as to reward his past services, had been promoted by Congress to the rank of brigadier.

As Lord Cornwallis retreated, Gates advanced to Charlotte; Smallwood encamped lower down the Catawba, on the road to Camden; and Morgan was pushed forward some distance in his front. In the expectation that all further active operations would be postponed till the opening of the ensuing spring, it was intended to pass the winter in this position. Such was the arrangement of the troops when their general was removed.

On the 5th of October, without any previous indications of dissatisfaction, Congress passed a resolution, requiring the commander in chief to order a court of enquiry on the conduct of Major-general Gates, as commander of the southern army; and to appoint some other officer to that command, till such enquiry should be made.

In the first campaigns, Major-general Greene had been distinguished by the commander in chief; and his military conduct, in the various situations in which he had been placed, had confirmed the good

good opinion inspired by the early evidence of his talents. When the choice of an officer for the southern department was submitted to General Washington, he did not hesitate to select Greene for that important and difficult service.

In a letter to Congress, recommending him to their support, he mentions General Greene as "an officer in whose abilities, fortitude, and integrity, from a long and intimate experience of them, he had the most entire confidence." Writing to Mr. Mathews, a delegate from South Carolina, on the same occasion, he said, "You have your wish in the officer appointed to the southern command. I think I am giving you a general; but what can a general do without men, without arms, without clothing, without stores, without provisions?"

Major Lee, who was soon afterwards promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, was ordered with his legion to join the southern army; where it was supposed, from the nature of the service and of the country, he could be most useful.

After employing some time in the necessary arrangements with Congress, who now annexed Delaware and Maryland to the southern department, General Greene hastened to the army he was to command, visiting on his way the governors and legislatures of the respective states from whom the means of prosecuting the war were to be derived.

He

He passed through Virginia while Leslie occupied Portsmouth; and as his principal supplies, both of men and stores, were to be drawn from that state, he left the Baron Steuben in Richmond, to command during the invasion, to arrange the Virginia line, and to organize and forward to him the reinforcements which were to follow him into North Carolina.

On the second of December he reached Charlotte, then the head-quarters of the southern army. Soon after his arrival in camp, he was gratified with the intelligence of a small piece of good fortune obtained by the address of Lieutenant-colonel Washington.

Smallwood, who occupied a post about fifteen miles in advance of Charlotte, drew his supplies of provisions principally from the country lying between his camp and the British lines. Having received information that a body of loyal militia, intending to intercept his waggons, had entered the country in which he foraged, he detached Morgan and Washington to cover his foraging party, and to surprise and bring off the corps by which it was threatened. Intelligence of Morgan's approach being received, the party he hoped to surprise retreated, and the principal object of the expedition miscarried; but Colonel Washington, being able to move with more celerity, and to penetrate deeper into the country than the infantry,

fantry, hearing that a party was stationed at Rugely's farm, within thirteen miles of Camden, resolved to make an attempt on them. He found them posted in a logged barn, strongly secured by abattis, and completely inaccessible to cavalry. Force being of no avail, stratagem alone could be resorted to, and he practised it with success. He painted the trunk of a pine, and mounted it on a carriage, so as to resemble a field-piece; and parading with it in front of the enemy, required them to surrender. Alarmed at the prospect of a cannonade, the whole party, consisting of one hundred and twelve men, with Colonel Rugely at their head, surrendered themselves prisoners of war.

To narrow the limits of the British general, and to prevent his drawing supplies from the upper country; to give spirit to the inhabitants, and enable them to form a number of small magazines for the subsistance of the army, in the event of its being able to advance in force; Greene detached Morgan to the south side of the Catawba, with orders to take a position near the confluence of the Pacolet with the Broad river, where he was to act offensively, or defensively, as circumstances might render advisable.

His party consisted of near four hundred chosen continental troops, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Howard of Maryland; of Washington's regiment

regiment of light dragoons, amounting to about eighty men; and of two companies of militia from the northern and western parts of Virginia, commanded by Captains Triplett and Tate. These companies were composed almost entirely of old continental soldiers. Having served the time for which they had inlisted, they had engaged themselves as substitutes in the militia. He was also to be joined, on Broad-river, by seven or eight hundred North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia volunteers and militia, commanded by General Davidson, and by Colonels Clarke and Few.

After making this detachment, Greene advanced lower down the Pedee, and encamped on its east side, opposite the Cheraw hills. The objects of this movement were to obtain subsistence for his army, and in some measure to cover the fertile country about Cross-creek. Lord Cornwallis remained at Winnsborough, making every preparation to commence his active opperations as soon as he should be joined by Leslie. Orders waited for that officer in Charlestown, directing him, without loss of time, to reinforce his lordship with fifteen hundred men.

The whole American army under the command of General Greene did not, at this time, much exceed two thousand men, of whom a great part were militia.

The position he occupied on the Pedee was about

about seventy miles from Winnsborough, and rather to the north-east from that place. The detachment under Morgan had taken post at Grindal's-ford on the Pacolet, one of the south forks of Broad-river, not quite fifty miles north-west of Winnsborough. The active courage of his troops, and the enterprising temper of their commander, rendered him extremely formidable to the parties of loyal militia who were embodying in that quarter of the country. His detachments obtained several small advantages over them; and on one occasion, Lieutenant-colonel Washington, with his own regiment and about two hundred mounted militia riflemen, came up with two hundred and fifty tory militia from Georgia, at Hammond's Store, near forty miles from Morgan's camp, whom he instantly charged so furiously that not one-third of them escaped.

Supposing the movement of Morgan to be directed against Ninety-six, Lord Cornwallis detached Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton with his legion, part of two regiments of infantry, and a body of artillery with two field-pieces, consisting all together of about one thousand men, across the Broad-river, to cover that important post.

Lord Cornwallis lay between Greene and Morgan; and it was an object of no inconsiderable importance to prevent the junction of their forces, and to strike at one of them while unsupported by the

the other. To leave it uncertain, as long as possible, against which division his first effort would be directed, he ordered Leslie to halt at Camden, until the preparations for the expedition into North Carolina should be completed. Having determined to enter that state by the upper route, he put his army in motion, and directed his course north-westward, between the Catawba and Broad-rivers. At the same time he instructed Leslie to move up the banks of the former, and to join him on the march. Orders were also dispatched to Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, to strike at Morgan, and push him to the utmost; at all events to drive him over Broad-river. If he should escape Tarleton, the hope was entertained that he might be intercepted by the main body of the army.

The impediments created by the swelling of water-courses, to an army incumbered with baggage and military stores, delayed Cornwallis and Leslie longer than had been expected; but Tarleton, who commanded light troops, overcame the same obstacles with less difficulty, and reached Morgan before a correspondent progress was made by the other divisions.

The combined movements of the British army were communicated to General Morgan on the 14th of January. Perceiving the insecurity of his own position, he retired across the Pacolet, the fords over which he was desirous of defending: but

but a passage over that river being effected on the 16th, at a ford about six miles above him, he made a precipitate retreat; and on the evening of the same day, the camp which he had abandoned was occupied by his pursuers. Morgan retired to the Cowpens, about three miles from the boundary line separating North from South Carolina; where being joined by some militia commanded by Pickens, he determined to risk an action. It was believed that he might, by a great effort, have crossed the Broad river, which was a short distance in his front, or have reached a mountainous country which was also but a few miles from him, before he could have been overtaken; and the superiority of his adversary was so decided, that every prudential consideration seemed to forbid him to hazard an engagement. Morgan, however, had great confidence in himself, and in his troops: he was unwilling to fly from an enemy not so decidedly his superior as to render it madness to fight him; and he also thought that if he should be overtaken while his men were fatigued and retreating, the probability of success would be much less than if he should exhibit the appearance of fighting from choice. These considerations determined him to halt earlier than was absolutely necessary.

Having left the whole of his baggage under a strong guard, with orders not to move till break of

of day, Tarleton, at three in the morning of the 17th, recommenced the pursuit.

Before day, Morgan received intelligence of his approach, and immediately prepared to receive him.

Although censured by many for having determined to fight, and by some for the ground he chose, all admit the judgment with which his dispositions were made.

On an eminence in an open wood, he drew up his continental troops, and Triplett's* corps (deemed equal to continentals); amounting together to between four and five hundred men, who were commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Howard. In their rear, on the descent of the hill, Lieutenant-colonel Washington was posted, as a corps de reserve. The cavalry was so placed as not to be exposed to the fire of the enemy who might engage his infantry, and yet to be in a situation to charge if any circumstance should occur to render a charge proper. On these two corps rested all his hopes of victory; and with them he remained in person. The front line was composed entirely of militia, under the command of Colonel Pickens. Major M'Dowell with a battalion of the North Carolina volunteers, and Major Cunningham with

* The two companies of Virginia militia formed one corps, which Triplett commanded, as being the senior officer.

a battalion

a battalion of Georgia volunteers, were advanced about one hundred and fifty yards in front of this line. They were ordered to give a single fire as the enemy approached, and then to fall back into the intervals which were left for them in the centre by the other battalions of militia. As it was not expected that the militia could long maintain their ground, they were ordered to keep up a retreating fire by regiments till they should pass the continental troops, on whose right they were directed again to form. The whole force of Morgan has been generally estimated at about one thousand men; but in his letter to General Greene, written two days after the battle, he states it at only eight hundred.

Soon after this disposition was made, the British van appeared in sight. Confident of a cheap victory, Tarleton instantly ordered the line to be formed. The light and legion infantry and the seventh regiment, with the artillery in their centre, and with a captain and fifty dragoons on each flank, were drawn up in a line, about two hundred and fifty yards in front of the advanced American militia. A battalion of the 71st regiment, and the remaining cavalry, formed the reserve, and were directed to wait for orders.

Morgan detached small parties of riflemen with directions to skirmish in front, but they could render little service. The instant the British line

was formed, it rushed forward with great impetuosity, shouting as it advanced. After a single fire, M'Dowell and Cunningham fell back into the line commanded by Colonel Pickens. This was charged with so much fury as to be unable to keep its ground, and soon retreated into the rear of the second line.*

The British continued to press forward with great eagerness, and though received by the continental troops with a firmness unimpaired by the rout of the front line, they continued to advance. Soon after the action with the continental troops had commenced, Tarleton ordered up his reserve. Perceiving that the enemy extended beyond him both on the right and left, and that on the right especially they were pressing forward to gain his flank, Howard ordered the company on his right to change its front, so as to face the British on that flank. From some fault or mistake in the officer commanding this company, it fell back, instead of fronting the enemy; upon which, the rest of the line, supposing a change of ground for the whole to have been directed, began to retire in perfect order. At this moment General Morgan rode up, and directed the infantry to retreat over the summit of the hill, about one hundred

* A part of the militia afterwards formed, and renewed the action on Howard's right.

yards,

yards, to the cavalry. This judicious order extricated the flanks from immediate danger. Believing the fate of the day to be decided, the British pressed on with increased ardour, and in some disorder; and when the Americans halted, were within thirty yards of them. The orders then given by Howard to face the enemy, were executed as soon as they were received; and the whole line poured in upon them a fire as deadly as it was unexpected. Perceiving the confusion occasioned by this sudden fire, Howard seized the critical moment, and ordered his regiment to charge them with the bayonet. These orders were instantly obeyed, and the British line was broken.

At the same moment, the detachment of cavalry on the British right was routed by Washington. The militia of Pickens had rode to the ground, and tied their horses in the rear of Howard's left. When the front line was broken, many of them fled to their horses, and were closely pursued by the cavalry; who, while the continental infantry were retiring, passed their flank, and were cutting down the scattered militia in their rear. Washington, who had previously ordered his men not to fire a pistol, now directed them to charge the British cavalry with drawn swords. A sharp conflict ensued; but it was not of long duration. The British were driven from the ground with

considerable slaughter, and were closely pursued. Both Howard and Washington pressed the advantage they had respectively gained, until the artillery, and a great part of the infantry, had surrendered. So sudden was the defeat, that a considerable portion of the British cavalry had not been brought into action; and, though retreating, remained unbroken. Washington pursued them rapidly, and was followed by Howard. He attacked them with great spirit;* but as they were superior to him in numbers, his party received a temporary check; and in this part of the action he sustained a greater loss than in any other. But the infantry advancing to support him, Tarleton continued the retreat.

In this action upwards of one hundred of the British, including ten commissioned officers, were

* In the eagerness of pursuit, Washington advanced nearly thirty yards in front of his regiment. Observing this, three British officers wheeled about, and made a charge upon him. The officer on his right was aiming to cut him down, when a serjeant came up, and intercepted the blow by disabling his sword arm. At the same instant, the officer on his left was also about to make a stroke at him; when a waiter, too small to wield a sword, saved him by wounding the officer with a ball discharged from a pistol. At this moment, the officer in the centre, who was believed to be Tarleton, made a thrust at him, which he parried; upon which the officer retreated a few paces, and then discharged a pistol at him, which wounded his horse.

killed;

killed; twenty-nine commissioned officers, and five hundred privates, were made prisoners. Eight hundred muskets, two field-pieces, two standards, thirty-five baggage waggons, and one hundred dragoon horses, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

Tarleton, with the greater part of his cavalry, retreated to Hamilton's ford on Broad river, towards the head-quarters of Lord Cornwallis, then about twenty-five miles from the Cowpens. The party left in his rear with the baggage, having received early information of his total defeat, set fire to such articles as they could not remove, and rejoined the main army.

This complete and decisive victory cost the Americans in killed and wounded less than eighty men.

Seldom has a battle in which no greater numbers were engaged, been so important in its consequences as that of the Cowpens. By it, Lord Cornwallis was not only deprived of a fifth-part of his force, but lost, so far as respected infantry, that active part of his army, which, in the species of war about to be entered on, is most useful to those who possess it, and most terrible to an enemy. Had the issue of the engagement been such as was to have been expected from the relative strength of the two detachments; and Morgan's corps, like that of Burford, been cut to pieces; it

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is impossible to say what consequences would have resulted to the southern states.

Unfortunately, Greene was not in a condition to avail himself of the advantage which had been obtained; and Lord Cornwallis sought only to repair, by the most vigorous and active exertions, the loss which he had suffered. The day after the battle was employed in forming a junction with Leslie; and early the next morning his army was again put in motion. Turkey Creek, where he lay, being as near the fords of the Catawba over which Morgan was to pass, as the Cowpens, he flattered himself that the Americans, encumbered with prisoners and baggage, might be intercepted before they could cross that river. With this view, he pressed forward with the utmost dispatch to the point of destination; but Morgan understood perfectly the danger of his situation, and the necessity of employing every moment in securing the fruits of his victory.

Abandoning the baggage which he had taken, and leaving his wounded under the protection of a flag, with surgeons to take care of them, he detached the militia, as a guard, to escort the prisoners into Virginia; while with his regular infantry and cavalry, who were not allowed time to breathe after returning from the pursuit, he brought up the rear in person. He pushed up the Broad river, which he crossed at the upper fords;

fords; and proceeding with the utmost celerity to the Catawba, passed it only two hours before the van of the British army reached its banks. On this occasion his good-fortune interposed to save him. In the evening of the 29th the British army reached the Catawba; and in the course of the night an immense flood of rain rendered the river impassable.

This favourable circumstance gave Morgan time to place his prisoners beyond the reach of his pursuers, and to refresh his own troops.

By destroying all his superfluous baggage, Lord Cornwallis had converted his whole army into a corps of light infantry, and thus endeavoured to compensate for the loss of his light troops by the increased activity of the main body. To escape a very superior army so circumstanced, which had the additional advantage of a strong corps of cavalry, was a work of no small difficulty.

On the 31st of January, while Morgan was encamped at Sherwood's ford, General Greene arrived in person, and took command of the detachment.

While that officer was encamped on the Pedee, opposite the Cheraw hills, he was joined by Lee's legion, amounting to about one hundred cavalry, and one hundred and twenty infantry. This reinforcement having put into his possession a corps well calculated for the prosecution of partisan war,

war, Lee was detached, the day after his arrival, to carry by surprise a post held by the enemy at George town, which was distant seventy-five miles from the American army, and therefore believed to be perfectly secure. This post was surprised, and a part of the garrison made prisoners; but the movements of Lord Cornwallis produced an absolute necessity for the immediate return of the legion to the army.

On receiving intelligence of the victory of the Cowpens, and the movements of the enemy, Greene detached Stevens's brigade of Virginia militia, whose terms of service were on the point of expiring, to take charge of the prisoners, and to conduct them to Charlotteville in Virginia. In the mean time he turned his whole attention to effecting a junction between the two divisions of his army; and it was principally with a view to this object, that he hastened in person to the detachment under Morgan, leaving the other division to be commanded by General Huger.*

Early in the morning of the 1st of February, Lord Cornwallis forced a passage over the Catawba, at a private ford, which was defended by General Davidson with about three hundred North Carolina militia. In the commencement of a skirmish

* General Smallwood had obtained leave to pass the winter in Maryland.

which

which took place on the occasion, Davidson was killed; upon which his troops immediately dispersed, and Tarleton was dispatched in pursuit of them.

Hearing that several bodies of militia were assembling at a tavern about ten miles from M'Cowan's ford, that officer hastened with his cavalry to the place of rendezvous. He found them collected in considerable numbers, and preparing to defend themselves. Charging them immediately with his usual impetuosity, he broke their centre, killed near fifty of them, and dispersed the whole party.

The militia of the neighbourhood were now too much fatigued by repeated tours of duty, and too much dispirited, to be prevailed on to join the American army, or to continue their opposition to the invaders of their country. The design of stopping Lord Cornwallis on the Catawba was necessarily relinquished; and Huger, who had been directed to march towards Salisbury, was ordered to change his route, so as to effect a junction between the two divisions of the army at some point still more to the north.

Without further opposition, the British troops crossed the river, and commenced a rapid pursuit. The American light infantry took the road to Salisbury; whence they proceeded to the trading ford on the Yadkin, which they reached on the night

night of the 2d of February. In the course of that night, the troops and nearly all the baggage were brought over, partly in flats, and partly by fording the river. Lord Cornwallis, however, pressed so close upon them, that his van skirmished smartly with a corps of riflemen constituting the rear guard, who escaped under cover of the night, and a part of the baggage fell into his hands. Greene brought over all the boats to the north side of the river, where they were secured.

At this place he was again preserved by a heavy fall of rain, through which both armies had marched, and which, by the next morning, rendered the Yadkin unfordable. The waters still continuing to rise, and the unsettled appearance of the weather being such as to afford no prospect of being able soon to pass them on the direct road, Lord Cornwallis determined to move up the Yadkin, and cross at the shallow fords near its source. On his proceeding to execute this determination, General Greene pursued his march to Guilford court-house, where he was joined on the 9th of February by the division conducted by Huger.

His infantry now amounted to two thousand effective men, of whom six hundred were militia. His cavalry was between two and three hundred strong. Lord Cornwallis lay twenty-five miles above him, with an army admirably well equipped, and estimated at two thousand five hundred men, including

including three hundred cavalry. Having failed in his attempt to prevent the junction of the two divisions of the American army, his present object apparently was to get between Greene and Virginia, so as to force that officer to a general action before he could be joined by the reinforcements which were known to be preparing for him in that state. His present situation favoured the accomplishment of this object.

Greene, on the other hand, was indefatigable in his exertions to cross the Dan, which is the largest and most southern branch of the Roanoke, without exposing himself to the hazard of a battle, which there was every reason to suppose must prove ruinous to his army. For this purpose his stores and heavy baggage, which had been ordered from Pedee towards Hillsborough, and thence to the Roanoke, were now hastened on to Prince Edward court-house in Virginia: and the whole of his cavalry, with the flower of his infantry, aided by a few militia riflemen, amounting together to rather more than seven hundred men, were formed into a light corps for the purpose of harassing and impeding the advancing enemy, till the less active part of his force, with the baggage and military stores, should be secured. Morgan being rendered by severe indisposition unfit for duty, the command of this corps was conferred on Colonel Otho H. Williams.

Lord

Lord Cornwallis had been informed that it would be impossible to obtain boats at the ferries on the Dan in sufficient numbers for the transportation of the American troops before he could overtake them; and, as the river could not be forded below, he calculated with confidence on succeeding in his object, by keeping above Greene, and preventing his reaching those shallow fords by which alone it was thought possible to escape into Virginia.

Dix's ferry is about fifty miles from Guilford court-house, and was almost equidistant from the two armies. Considerably below, and more than seventy miles from Guilford court-house, were two other ferries, Boyd's and Irwine's, which were only four miles apart. By taking the direct route, the distance between the two armies would be no advantage, and it would be impracticable to bring the boats from the lower ferries up the strong current at that time in the river. It would therefore be impossible for them to attempt that route, without being intercepted or overtaken at the Dan. But by directing their march towards the lower and more remote ferries, the distance from Lord Cornwallis was so much ground gained; and by dispatching an officer with a few men to Dix's, the boats at that place and at an intermediate ferry might be brought down the river in time to meet the army at the intended crossing-place. It was

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an additional consideration of great weight, that Boyd's and Irwine's were so near each other, that both might be used by different parts of his army, without incurring any hazard from its division. These facts being suggested by Lieutenant-colonel Carrington, who had been appointed quarter-master-general for the southern department, the proposition was instantly adopted, and an officer dispatched to bring down the upper boats to Boyd's ferry.

The next day both armies resumed their line of march. The activity of the light corps under Williams obliged Lord Cornwallis* to advance with caution, and to preserve a compact order: yet he moved with great rapidity, and, notwithstanding the numerous obstructions he encountered, advanced nearly thirty miles a day.

The measures adopted by Greene for the collection of boats were successful; and on the 14th, with infinite fatigue, he effected the passage of his troops and stores. In the preceding twenty-four hours the light infantry had marched forty miles; and scarcely had the rear touched the northern bank, when the van of the enemy appeared on the opposite shore.

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* On the march, Lieutenant-colonel Lee charged his advanced cavalry so suddenly and furiously, as almost to cut a company to pieces. A captain and several privates were made prisoners.

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That General Greene was able to effect this retreat, not only without the loss of men, but without losing any valuable part of his stores, is an evidence of the judgment with which every favourable circumstance was improved. With the exception of a few waggons abandoned on the south of the Yadkin, nothing was taken from him; and though pressed closely by a superior army, capable of sacrificing all its own baggage, and of encountering all the severities of the season without accommodations, conducted by a general of uncommon activity, no advantage was gained over him during a retreat of more than two hundred miles, through a country affording no assistance, and opposing no obstacles but its waters to the progress of any enemy.

The exertions, the fatigues, the sufferings, and the patience of both armies during this long, toilsome, and rapid pursuit, were extreme. Without tents, without spirits, often without provisions, and always badly supplied with them, through deep and frozen roads, high waters, and incessant rains, in the very depth of winter, each performed without a murmur the severe duties assigned to it. The difference between them consisted only in this: the British troops were well clothed; the Americans were almost naked, and many of them barefooted.

Great praise was bestowed by the general on his whole

whole army; but the exertions of Colonel Williams and of Lieutenant-colonel Carrington were particularly noticed.

Although the part of North Carolina through which the armies had passed was well-affected to the American cause, yet such was the rapidity with which they moved, and such the terror inspired by the presence of the enemy, that no aids were drawn from the militia. Indeed, those who had joined the army from the more remote parts of the country, could not be retained; and when it reached the Dan, the militia attached to it did not exceed eighty men.

General Greene having been driven entirely out of North Carolina, the pursuit was given up; and Lord Cornwallis turned his attention to the complete reduction of that state under the authority of the British crown. For this purpose he proceeded by easy marches to Hillsborough, at that time its capital; where he erected the royal standard, and invited the inhabitants by proclamation to repair to it, and to take an active part in assisting him to restore the ancient government. From the commencement of the war great numbers in North Carolina had been hostile to the revolution, and had made various abortive efforts to serve the royal cause. The British army being now able to protect them, it was supposed that large reinforcements

ments would be derived from those who were in the British interest.

When Lord Cornwallis crossed the Catawba, General Greene addressed the most pressing letters to the militia officers commanding in the counties of Virginia adjacent to the Dan, stating the danger with which they were threatened, and urging them to reinforce him. These letters had the desired effect; and as soon as it was known that he had entered Virginia, a few of the neighbouring counties furnished six hundred men, the command of whom he gave to General Stevens, who had continued with the army notwithstanding the discharge of his brigade.

The strongest apprehensions were entertained that Lord Cornwallis would succeed to the extent of his hopes in recruiting his army, and in procuring the general submission of the people, if he should be left in the undisturbed possession of the country. By again showing a respectable force there, Greene flattered himself with being able to overawe those who were already in the interests of the enemy, and to reanimate those whom the fatigues, the sufferings, and the privations of the war, might induce to acquiesce in the authority of the British crown. On receiving the small reinforcement which has been mentioned, he determined to recommence active operations; and, without

without coming to a general engagement till additional aid should arrive, to attempt the arduous part of keeping the field against an enemy who had demonstrated a capacity for rapid movement and hardy enterprise, and who possessed a decided superiority both in the number and equipment of his troops.

On the 18th, while Lord Cornwallis remained on the opposite shore, the legion of Lee had repassed the Dan, for the purpose of watching his motions. On the 21st, the light infantry also recrossed it; and on the 23d, they were followed by the main body of the army.

The baggage and stores, those only excepted which were indispensably required for immediate use, remained in Virginia; and the light infantry hung round the quarters of the enemy, while the main body of the army advanced slowly, keeping in view the routes to the western parts of the country, from which was expected a considerable reinforcement of militia and riflemen, under Colonel Campbell of Virginia, and some officers of North Carolina.*

* The militia of the back country had been engaged in a war with the Cherokee Indians, who, neglected by the United States, and incited by the British, had determined once more to take up the hatchet. The militia from the western parts of Virginia and North Carolina entered their country, burnt almost

General Greene was not deceived in the consequences which he had apprehended from leaving Lord Cornwallis in the peaceable possession of North Carolina. In one day, seven independent companies were raised; and on the first invitation given to the loyalists to assemble in arms, a large number of them began to embody on the branches of the Haw-river. Colonel Tarleton, with a part of his legion, was detached from Hillsborough to favour their rising, and to conduct them to the British army.

Intelligence of the movements, both of the loyalists and of Tarleton, being received, Lieutenant-colonel Lee, with the cavalry of his legion, and General Pickens with a corps of militia, were detached to attack both parties.

In a long lane, Lee came up with the royalists, who were distinguished by a red badge in their hats. He was mistaken by them for Tarleton, whom they had not yet seen, to whose encampment they were proceeding unapprehensive of danger, and whose legion was then refreshing itself not much more than a mile distant from them. Perceiving their mistake, Lee entered the lane,

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almost all their towns, containing nearly one thousand houses, destroyed fifty thousand bushels of grain, killed twenty-nine men, took several prisoners, and compelled the nation to sue for peace.

received

received their expressions of joy and attachment, and was passing them in the hope of surprising Tarleton.

Unfortunately for the success of this design, the troops of Pickens, who followed close in his rear, were recognized by the insurgents; and a firing took place between them. It being apparent that this circumstance must give the alarm to the British cavalry, Lee changed his plan; and turning on the royalists, who still considered him as a British officer, cut them to pieces while they were making protestations of loyalty, and asserting, that they were "the very best friends of the king." Between two and three hundred, among whom was Colonel Pyle their leader, are said to have fallen under the swords of his cavalry. This terrible carnage in a great measure broke the spirits of the tories in that part of the country, and intimidated many who were disposed to take up arms in support of the royal cause. Some, who were actually on the way to join the British standard, returned in order to wait the issue of events, before they went too far to recede.

Alarmed by the firing of the militia, Tarleton ordered his men to mount, and, re-crossing the Haw, returned to Hillsborough.

The country around Hillsborough had been so exhausted, that Lord Cornwallis found it absolutely impossible to draw from it the means of sub-

sisting his army. On this account, and for the purpose of approaching more nearly the great body of loyalists who were settled between Haw and Deep rivers, and whose insecurity had been demonstrated by the late disaster of Colonel Pyle, his lordship deemed it expedient to change his position, and to take one in a country less exhausted, which should at the same time cover his friends who were threatened by the American army. With these objects he crossed the Haw, and encamped on Allimance Creek.

As the British retired, General Greene advanced. He also crossed the northern branch of the Haw, near its source, and encamped between Troublesome Creek and Reedy Fork. Not being yet in a condition to hazard an engagement, he changed his ground every night. In the course of the critical operations which were performed in order to avoid an action, to overawe the loyalists, and to maintain a position favourable for a junction with the several detachments, who were marching from different quarters to his assistance, he derived immense service from a bold and active light infantry, commanded by Colonel Williams; and a cavalry which, though inferior in numbers, was rendered superior in effect to that of the enemy, by being much better mounted. They often attacked boldly and successfully; and penetrated the country, so as every where to intimidate those

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in the British interests. Such was the terror they inspired, that, notwithstanding the favourable dispositions of a great number of the inhabitants, Lord Cornwallis found it difficult to procure intelligence on which any reliance could be placed. From these causes, all attempts to bring the American general to an action were frustrated; and his lordship was under the necessity of keeping his men close in their quarters, that no essential advantage might be gained, without an attack in such force as would endanger a much more serious engagement than General Greene was at present disposed to risk.

During this hazardous trial of skill, Lord Cornwallis moved out in full force towards Reedy Fork, where the light infantry lay, in the hope of surprising that corps under the favourable cover of a thick fog, and probably with ulterior views against General Greene. A sharp skirmish took place; in which Campbell's militia riflemen, who had joined the army, and Lee's legion, were principally engaged against a much superior body of British troops, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Webster.

The Americans retired with the loss of about fifty men killed and wounded. As those engaged were chiefly riflemen, and as their retreat was completely covered by the regulars, who gave the British troops, while pursuing them, a severe check,

check, the loss of the enemy was supposed to be rather greater. On this occasion General Greene fell back to the iron-works on Troublesome Creek; and Lord Cornwallis withdrew his men to their former station.

At length, all the reinforcements which had been expected were received; and, knowing that the militia could not long keep the field, Greene, in his turn, sought a battle.

The corps of light infantry was dissolved; and the whole army being united, he marched to Guilford court-house, and took a position within eight* miles of the ground occupied by Lord Cornwallis.

By a field-return made on the 13th of March, his rank and file amounted to four thousand two hundred and sixty-one; in which number were included one hundred and eighty-eight cavalry, commanded by Washington and Lee. The continental infantry amounted to one thousand four hundred and ninety; and the residue of the army was made up of Virginia and North Carolina militia. Those of Virginia were commanded by Generals Stevens and Lawson, and by Colonels Campbell, Preston, and Lynch; and those of North Carolina by Generals Butler and Eaton.

Of the continental infantry, of whom there

* The English accounts say twelve.

were

were four regiments, only one was veteran. The Virginia line having been chiefly captured in Charlestown, the present regular force of that state, which amounted to seven hundred and seventy-eight rank and file, consisted of new levies, with a few old continental soldiers interspersed among them. Nearly one-half of them had been in camp only a few days, and had never beheld an enemy. The old line of Maryland had been so thinned by successive battles, and by hard service, as to be reduced to a single regiment; and the second regiment of that state, like the regiments from Virginia, was composed of new levies who had lately joined the army. The legion of Lee, and the cavalry of Washington, like the first regiment of Maryland, had every advantage of experience and approved courage; and nearly all the officers commanding the new levies were veterans.

Having determined to risk an action, Greene chose his ground with judgment. Not being attacked so immediately as the solicitude which Lord Cornwallis had manifested for a general engagement induced him to expect, he became apprehensive of being under the necessity of changing it; and was determining to march in quest of his Lordship, when the fire of his reconnoitring parties, early in the morning of the 15th of March, announced the approach of the British army on the great Salisbury road.

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The order of battle was immediately formed. The whole country presented the appearance of a great wilderness, covered with tall trees and thick underwood, interspersed rarely with cleared fields. The army was drawn up in three lines, on a large hill surrounded by other hills, chiefly covered with trees and underwood.

The front line was composed entirely of the two brigades of North Carolina militia, commanded by Generals Butler and Eaton, amounting to one thousand and sixty men, exclusive of officers. They were posted to great advantage in the edge of the wood, behind a strong rail-fence, with an extensive open field in their front.

The second line was composed of the two brigades of Virginia militia, commanded by Stevens and Lawson, amounting to eleven hundred and twenty-three rank and file. They were drawn up in the wood, about three hundred yards in the rear of the first line, and on both sides of the great Salisbury road.

The third line was drawn up about three hundred yards in the rear of the second, and was composed wholly of continental troops. The Virginia brigade, commanded by General Huger, was on the right; that of Maryland, commanded by Colonel Williams, on the left. The field-return already mentioned, made two days before the action, shews them to have been thirteen hundred and

and sixty-eight strong;* but they had been somewhat reduced by detaching from them the light infantry of Kirkwood. They were drawn up obliquely, with their left diverging from the second line, and partly in open ground.

The first and third regiments of dragoons (amounting to one hundred and two troopers), Kirkwood's company of light infantry, and a regiment of militia riflemen under Colonel Lynch, formed a corps of observation for the security of the right flank, which was commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Washington. The legion, consisting of one hundred and sixty-eight horse and foot, and a body of riflemen, commanded by Colonels Campbell and Preston, formed a corps of observation for the security of the left flank, which was placed under Lieutenant-colonel Lee.

The artillery was stationed in the front line, in the great road leading through the centre, with directions to fall back as occasion should require.

The baggage had been previously sent to the iron-works, ten miles in the rear; at which place the troops were ordered to rendezvous, if the day should prove unfortunate.

In this order General Greene waited for the enemy; not entirely free from anxiety lest he should not be attacked immediately in front, but should

* This number is exclusive of the legion infantry.

be

be compelled, by the movements of the British general, to relinquish the advantages which he supposed himself to derive from his position.

When the American army advanced to its present ground, Lord Cornwallis lay at the quaker meeting-house on Deep river. He at once perceived that Greene was now disposed to give him battle, and was sensible that the numbers of that officer were greatly augmented by forces whose continuance in service would be of short duration; but so important was it to the interests of his sovereign to maintain the appearance of superiority in the field, that he was unwilling to decline the engagement now offered him. Sending his baggage, therefore, on the evening of the 14th, under a strong guard to Bell's mill on Deep river, where the affections of the inhabitants gave it additional security, he immediately prepared for action.

Early next morning his army was put in motion for the purpose of attacking Greene wherever he should be found. About four miles from Guilford court-house, the advance led by Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton fell in with Lee, whose legion was strengthened by Campbell's riflemen; and a smart skirmish ensued, which was terminated by the appearance of such large reinforcements as rendered it prudent for Lee to retire. His Lordship then continued to advance till he came in view of the first line of the American army.

On

On the first appearance of the British column, a cannonade was commenced upon it from the two six-pounders stationed in the road, which was immediately returned; and Lord Cornwallis made his disposition for the attack in the following order.

The seventy-first British regiment, with the German regiment of Bose, led by General Leslie, and supported by the first battalion of the guards under Colonel Norton, formed the right of the line; and the twenty-third and thirty-third regiments, led by Lieutenant-colonel Webster, and supported by Brigadier-general O'Hara, with the grenadiers and second battalion of the guards, formed the left. The light infantry of the guards, and the Yagers, posted on the left of the artillery, and the cavalry in column behind it in the road, formed a corps of observation.

This disposition being made, the British troops advanced to the charge, with the cool determined courage which discipline inspires.

Notwithstanding the great advantages of their position, and the security afforded by the cover of a thick wood, a strong fence, and a second line in their rear, the North Carolina militia fled with the utmost precipitation. At the distance of one hundred and forty yards, their fire commenced on an enemy advancing through an open field. Many of them did not even once discharge their loaded muskets:

muskets: and, except a small part of one of the battalions in Eaton's brigade, none gave more than a second fire. The exertions of the generals and field-officers were entirely unavailing. Terrified at the sight of the enemy, they fled in every direction. Many of them threw away their arms; and, dispersing themselves through the woods, made the best of their way to their respective homes. The few who kept their ground gave way, of course, at the first fire upon them.

The British now advanced on the second line, where they were received with more firmness. Stevens had posted sentinels about forty yards in the rear of his brigade, with peremptory orders to shoot any man who should break the ranks and attempt to escape, before he should direct a retreat. Here the action was kept up for some time with great resolution. Perceiving the corps on their flanks, the enemy brought the whole of their reserved infantry into the line. On their right, General Leslie brought up the guards to oppose Lee; and on the left, Webster changed his front to the left, and attacked Washington; while the grenadiers and second battalion of guards moved forward to occupy the ground which he had just quitted. Colonel Tarleton alone was not engaged; and, as his cavalry now constituted the reserve of the army, he was directed to preserve that corps entire and compact, and not to charge without

without receiving orders to do so, unless it should be evidently and urgently necessary.

Observing that the ground was unfavourable for the action of horse, Washington had posted Lynch's riflemen, with whom he remained in person, on a height covered with thick woods; and had drawn up his cavalry and continental infantry about one hundred yards in their rear. On being attacked by Webster, the riflemen immediately broke; and, finding it impossible to rally them, Washington rejoined his cavalry.

The British continuing to advance, and it being well understood that the militia could not stand the bayonet, not only from their state of discipline, but also from their want of that weapon; General Stevens, who had received a ball in his right thigh, at length ordered his brigade to retreat. Lawson's brigade had some short time before given way, so that the second line was entirely routed. The enemy then advanced boldly on the third.

The several divisions of the British army had been separated from each other, by the necessity of extending themselves to the right and left, in order to encounter the distinct corps which threatened their flanks.

They had experienced a different degree of resistance from the different parts of the second line, and each regiment had advanced as its adversary gave way. This cause contributed still further to separate

separate them; and the thickness of the wood increased the difficulty of restoring order. They pressed forward with great eagerness, but with a considerable degree of irregularity.

Greene now entertained the most sanguine hopes of a complete victory. His continental troops were fresh, in perfect order, and upon the point of being attacked by an enemy broken into distinct parts, and in all probability supposing the severity of the action to be over.

The second regiment of Maryland was posted at some distance from the first, in open ground; its left forming almost a right angle with the line, so as to present a front to any corps which might attack on that flank. In advancing, the British inclined to the right; and the second battalion of guards entered the open ground immediately after the retreat of Stevens, and rushed on the second regiment of Maryland, while the first was engaged with Webster. Without waiting to receive the charge, that regiment broke in the utmost confusion, and every effort of their officers to rally them proved ineffectual. The guards pursued them for a short distance, and took two six-pounders, which this precipitate flight had left entirely exposed. This movement threw the guards into the rear of the first regiment, from which they were concealed by the unevenness of the ground, and by a skirt of wood.

Greene

Greene was himself on the left, and witnessed the misfortune without being able to remedy it. He at once perceived that this circumstance would most probably decide the fate of the day. His militia being entirely routed, and one-fourth of his continental troops having fled from the field, he supposed it would be hazarding too much to risk his remaining three regiments, only one of which could be safely relied on, without a single man to cover their retreat, if the event should prove unfortunate. Colonel Greene of Virginia, therefore, was ordered to withdraw his regiment from the line, and to take a position at some distance in the rear, for the purpose of affording a rallying-point to the fugitives, and of covering the retreat of the two regiments which still continued in the field.

The guards were soon called from the pursuit of the fugitives, and led by Lieutenant-colonel Stewart against the first regiment of Maryland, which was commanded by Colonel Gunby. About this time Webster, finding himself engaged with Kirkwood's company, and the remaining regiment of Virginia, as well as with that of Maryland, had in some measure withdrawn from the action, and the firing between him and Gunby had almost entirely ceased. In this state of things, information was received by Gunby of the approach of Stewart in the rear; upon which he ordered his regiment to face about, and to advance up a piece of

of rising ground towards the enemy. The guards soon shewed themselves on the summit of the hill, and a very animated fire took place on both sides, during which the Americans continued to advance.

In this critical moment, Lieutenant-colonel Washington was drawn to this part of the action by the vivacity of the fire. He instantly made a furious charge upon the guards, and broke their ranks.

While ascending the hill, Gunby's horse was killed under him; and, being entangled in the fall, he was for some time unable to extricate himself. For the moment, Lieutenant-colonel Howard commanded the regiment; which advanced with such rapidity, that Gunby could not overtake it, and which was within thirty yards of the guards when they were charged by the cavalry. Almost at the same instant the infantry rushed upon them with the bayonet, and, following the horse through them, had the whole battalion completely in their power. In passing through it Captain Smith, of the infantry, killed its commanding officer.

After passing through the guards into the open ground, where the second regiment had been originally posted, Howard perceived several columns of the enemy, and among them some pieces of artillery. Believing his regiment to be the only one remaining in the field, he retreated in perfect order, and brought off some prisoners; although many of

of the guards, who had fallen while the Americans were charging through them, rose and fired on him. About the same time the cavalry also retreated.*

Nearly about the same time the remaining Virginia regiment, commanded by Colonel Hawes, and Kirkwood's infantry, which had formed on the right of the whole when the second line was routed, also retreated. Colonel Webster had been warmly engaged with those corps, while he kept up a more distant fire on the first regiment of Maryland. He had found himself so closely pressed, that he was under the necessity of retiring behind a ravine which he had crossed, and of taking a position on its opposite bank, until he should learn the situation of affairs on the British right. This occasioned that cessation of his fire, which left Gunby at liberty to direct his whole force against the guards. On finding the action restored in

* After passing through the guards into the cleared ground, Washington, who always led the van, perceived an officer surrounded by several persons appearing to be aides-de-camp. Believing this to be Lord Cornwallis, he rushed on with the hope of making him a prisoner, when he was arrested by an accident. His cap fell from his head, and as he leaped to the ground to recover it, the officer leading the column was shot through the body, and rendered incapable of managing his horse. The animal wheeled round with his rider, and galloped off the field. He was followed by all the cavalry, who supposed that this movement had been directed.

other parts of the line, Webster had returned to the charge; after which he rather gained upon Hawes, and endeavoured to turn his right flank.

There being reason to apprehend that Hawes would be completely enveloped by the enemy, Greene ordered a retreat. This circumstance took place about the time when the left also retreated. The artillery, consisting of four field-pieces, as well as two ammunition-waggons, were unavoidably abandoned; the horses which drew them being killed, and the woods too thick to admit of their being dragged elsewhere than along the great road. The retreat was made in good order, and Greene in person brought up the rear.

The action on the right and centre was now entirely over; but Campbell's riflemen still maintained their ground on the extreme of the American left, against General Leslie with the regiment of Bose and the first battalion of guards.

After the guards had routed the brigade commanded by Lawson, and had gained the summit of the hill on which the Virginia militia had been posted, they found themselves attacked on their right flank by the infantry of Lee's legion, and by the militia riflemen. The fire was so well maintained both on their front and flank, that they were entirely broken and driven behind the regiment of Bose; which, having moved with less impetuosity, was advancing in compact order. This

regiment

regiment sustained the fire of the Americans till Lieutenant-colonel Norton was able to rally the guards, and to bring them back to the charge; after which the riflemen drew them into a thick wood, where the action was maintained with great obstinacy on both sides, till the battle was lost on the right. Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton was then ordered to the support of Leslie. On coming up he charged the riflemen; who, being unable to resist cavalry, were driven from the field.

Two regiments of infantry and a detachment of cavalry pursued the right wing and centre of the Americans for a short distance, but they were soon ordered to return. It is probable that, on examining his situation, Lord Cornwallis found himself too much weakened in the action to hazard its renewal. About three miles from the field of battle, behind Reedy Fork creek, General Greene halted for the purpose of collecting his stragglers; after which he retired about twelve miles to the Iron-works on Troublesome Creek, the place appointed for the rendezvous of his army in the event of its being defeated.

The returns made immediately after the action exhibit a loss, in killed, wounded, and missing in the continental troops, of fourteen commissioned officers and three hundred and twelve non-commissioned officers and privates. Of these, Major

Anderson, a valuable officer of Maryland, one captain, three subalterns, and fifty-two commissioned officers and privates, were certainly killed in the field; and, as the principal part of the action was fought under cover of a thick wood, it is probable that several of those who were returned missing, were in reality among the slain.

General Huger, who commanded the Virginia continentals, was wounded. The same return states the loss of the militia at four captains and seventeen privates killed; and in addition to General Stevens, one major, three captains, eight subalterns, and sixty privates, were wounded. A great proportion of this part of the army was missing; but it seems to have been expected that they would either rejoin their corps, or be found at their homes.

The victory at Guilford was dearly purchased. Official accounts state the loss of the British army at five hundred and thirty-two men; among whom were several officers of high rank and distinguished merit. Lieutenant-colonel Stewart of the guards was killed in the action; and Lieutenant-colonel Webster, who was ranked by his enemies among the best officers in the British service, received a wound of which he expired in a few days. This loss, when compared with the numbers brought by Lord Cornwallis into the field, was very considerable. The computation of the Americans did not

rate

rate the enemy at more than two thousand rank and file; but their own accounts state them at only fourteen hundred and forty-five.

No battle in the course of the war reflects more honour on the courage of the British troops than that of Guilford. On no other occasion had they fought with such inferiority of numbers, or disadvantages of ground. Not to count the first line, which relinquished without a struggle its advantageous position, General Greene's army consisted of three thousand two hundred men, posted on ground chosen by himself; and his disposition was skilfully made.

In his camp at the Iron-works on Troublesome creek, General Greene expected to be again attacked, since all the motives which had induced Lord Cornwallis to risk the battle of Guilford still operated. Exclusive of the killed and wounded, upwards of eight hundred of his militia were missing; and, according to the established usage of those troops, he counted certainly on their returning to their respective homes: but, as this was a much greater diminution of numbers than of actual military strength, and as the enemy was known to have been also very much weakened in the late action, he had resolved on coming to another engagement, for which he made immediate dispositions.

But the situation of Lord Cornwallis was in reality

reality more desperate than it was supposed to be by the American general. The possession of the field yielded no positive good; and he derived from victory no other advantage than safety to the remnant of his army.

The consequences of the battle proved, that Greene had been not less judicious in determining to fight, than in the arrangement he had made of his troops.

The diminution of the British force, and the inability of the neighbouring country longer to furnish the necessary supplies, rendered it unadvisable for Lord Cornwallis either to hazard another action, or to attempt to maintain his present position. He found himself not only incapable of realising any one of the advantages he had promised himself from victory; but under the absolute necessity of retreating to some place of greater security, where provisions to subsist his army might certainly be obtained.

When the expedition into North Carolina was originally meditated, the acquisition of Wilmington, a town near the mouth of Cape Fear River, was contemplated as a part of the plan. This position was deemed of considerable importance; as it united to a safe and easy communication with the sea, the facility of a water transportation extending deep into the country, and reaching very near that district which had been lately the theatre

of

of action. This enterprise was committed to Major Craig. At the head of three hundred British soldiers, and a few marines, aided by a small naval force, he took possession of the place without opposition, and extended his authority several miles up the river. From a communication with this post Lord Cornwallis now looked for aids which had become indispensably necessary to the further operations of the campaign.

On the day of leaving Guilford court-house, after having resolved on a movement towards the south-east, so as to approach Wilmington, he issued a proclamation, announcing his victory of the 15th, and calling on all loyal subjects to stand forth and take an active part in restoring good order and government.

This proclamation was issued in the hope that it would induce the royalists to join his standard; an object of infinite importance in the present state of his army. To promote it, he designed to establish his head-quarters at Cross creek; a place which was favourable to these views, and at the same time so connected with Wilmington by the Cape Fear river, into which it empties, that he flattered himself with being able to obtain from thence every necessary supply.

His resolution being taken, Lord Cornwallis broke up his encampment on the third day after the battle; and leaving such of his wounded as could

could not be moved, to fall into the hands of the Americans, proceeded by slow and easy marches towards Cross creek.

On hearing that the British army, instead of advancing on him as he had expected, was certainly retreating, General Greene immediately resolved to follow it; and the American troops were put in motion for that purpose.

The continual rains; the consequent badness of the roads; the great difficulty of subsisting the troops in a country never abundant, and now very much exhausted, and extremely hostile; but above all, the necessity of waiting for a supply of ammunition; impeded so considerably the march of the American army, that it did not reach Ramsay's mills on Deep river till the 28th of March.

At this place Lord Cornwallis had halted; and here General Greene expected to overtake and attack him. But on the approach of the American army, his lordship resumed his march; and passing Deep river on a bridge previously constructed for that purpose, proceeded to Cross creek, and afterwards to Wilmington, where he arrived on the 7th of April.

General Greene gave over the pursuit at Ramsay's mills. So excessive had been the sufferings of his army for the want of provisions, that many of his men fainted on the march, and it had become

come absolutely necessary to give them some repose and refreshment.

The impossibility of subsisting his army did not constitute the only motive for not following Lord Cornwallis to Wilmington. In this critical state of the campaign, he found himself once more reduced to his handful of continental troops. The Virginia militia, having been called into service only for six weeks, were about to leave him. The places of those who had performed their tour of duty not being supplied by others, it became advisable to suspend the pursuit.

At Ramsay's mills, Greene deliberated on his future operations. Wilmington being accessible to ships, it was obviously impracticable to act with effect against the army in that place. In the mean time, having it at his option to act offensively, or to continue merely on the defensive, Lord Cornwallis would certainly retain all his possessions in the two more southern states.

Thus circumstanced, Greene took the bold and happy resolution to carry the war immediately into South Carolina.

The motives which induced the adoption of this measure, were stated by himself in a letter communicating his determination to the commander in chief. It would, he conceived, compel Lord Cornwallis to follow him, or to sacrifice all the posts held by the British in the upper parts of South Carolina and Georgia.

If

If the former part of the alternative should be embraced, it would entirely liberate North Carolina from the invading army, and enable that state to raise its quota of troops for the continental service; if the latter, the two states of South Carolina and Georgia would probably be restored to the union, and the possessions of the enemy in the southern country would be reduced to the sea-ports of Charlestown and Savannah.

The southern army, now reduced to the continental troops of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, amounted to about one thousand seven hundred effectives, including the cavalry and artillery. That of Lord Cornwallis is represented to have been still less numerous. Mr. Stedman, who was commissary-general of the British army, states its effective force at only one thousand four hundred and thirty-five men.* So impotent were the means employed for the conquest and defence of an immense extent of valuable country, the possession of which was highly interesting to both parties!

So much time elapsed before intelligence of the movement made by Greene towards South Carolina reached Wilmington, as to render it most probable that the fate of Lord Rawdon would be

* Yet General Clinton supposed the troops in the southern department, under Lord Cornwallis, when joined by Leslie, to exceed eleven thousand.

decided

decided before it could be practicable for Earl Cornwallis to join him.

This circumstance seems to have produced for a time in the latter nobleman no inconsiderable degree of irresolution respecting the plan of his future operations.

If the British arms in South Carolina should be successful, his return to that country would be unnecessary, and would be abandoning a great part of the ground already gained. On the contrary, should Lord Rawdon be defeated and driven into Charlestown, there was much reason to be apprehensive for his own safety, if Greene, aided by the numerous militia who would be brought into the field by that event, should find him on his march, embarrassed with the large rivers he would be under the necessity of crossing.

After considering maturely the probable advantages and disadvantages to be expected from a return to South Carolina, Earl Cornwallis decided against this retrograde movement; and determined to advance still further northward into Virginia, which had been invaded by a strong detachment of British troops, commanded first by General Arnold, and afterwards by Major-general Phillips. In pursuance of this determination, his army moved from Wilmington on the 25th of April.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

Virginia invaded by Arnold—He destroys valuable stores at Richmond—Retires to Portsmouth—Mutiny in the Pennsylvania line—Sir Henry Clinton attempts to negotiate with the mutineers—They compromise with the civil authority—Mutiny in the Jersey line—Mission of Colonel Laurens to France—Propositions to Spain—Recommendations relative to a duty on imported and prize goods—Reform in the organization of the executive departments—Confederation adopted—Military transactions—Fayette detached to Virginia—Destouches sails for the Chesapeak—Operations of the British army in Virginia—Cornwallis arrives—Presses Fayette over the Rapidan—Fayette forms a junction with Wayne—Cornwallis retires to the Lower Country—General Washington's letters are intercepted—Action near Jamestown.

THE evacuation of Portsmouth by Leslie afforded Virginia but a short interval of repose. So early as the 9th of December, 1780, a letter from General Washington announced to the Governor, that a large embarkation, supposed to be destined for the south, was about to take place at New York. On the 19th, a fleet of transports under convoy, having on board about one thousand

sand six hundred men, commanded by General Arnold, sailed from the Hook. The fleet was scattered in a storm, and transports containing about four hundred men were separated from the convoy. The rest anchored, on the 30th, in Hampton-roads. The next day the troops were embarked on board vessels adapted to the navigation; after which, they proceeded up James-river, under convoy of two small ships of war.

On the 4th of January, 1781, they reached Westover; distant about one hundred and forty miles from the Capes, and about twenty-five from Richmond, the capital of Virginia.

Thus far, the immediate destination of Arnold remained uncertain. His movements threatened equally the two towns of Richmond and Petersburgh: the first of which stands on the northern bank of James-river, at the falls or *rapids;* and the second on the Appomattox, which empties itself into James-river a little above Westover. The latter had been the depository of continental stores to a considerable amount, designed for the southern service.

Major-general Baron Steuben, who still remained in Virginia, supposing Petersburg to be the immediate object of the British army, ordered the new levies, amounting to less than two hundred men, to that place; and directed them to move the public stores out of the reach of the enemy.

The

The lower country of Virginia, extending from the ocean to the falls of its rivers, is particularly unfavourable to the prompt assembling of militia. The white population is not numerous; and the territory which it inhabits is divided by large navigable rivers, not to be passed unless boats are previously prepared for the purpose, nor then if the smallest armed vessel should oppose the attempt.

On the first intelligence that a fleet had passed the Capes, General Nelson, who was then at Richmond, was dispatched for the purpose of raising the lower militia; and, on the 2d of January, orders were issued to call out those above, and in the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

On reaching Westover, Arnold landed with the greater part of his army, and immediately commenced his march towards Richmond. The few continental troops at Petersburgh were ordered to the capital; and between one and two hundred militia, who had been collected from the town and its immediate vicinity, were directed to harass the advancing enemy. In the mean time, exertions were made to save the stores; partly by removing them up to Westham, a crossing-place at the commencement of the rapids; and partly by conveying them over the river, the passage of which Baron Steuben, with his handful of continental troops, intended to defend.

The

The small party of militia detached to harass the enemy was too weak to effect the object; and the day after landing at Westover, Arnold entered Richmond, where he halted with about five hundred of his troops. The residue, amounting to about four hundred (including thirty horse), proceeded under Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe to Westham, where they burnt and destroyed a valuable foundry, boring-mill, powder-magazine, and other smaller buildings, together with military stores to a considerable amount. Several pieces of artillery and a few muskets fell into their hands, and were either rendered useless or brought off. Many valuable papers belonging to the government, which had been carried thither as to a place of safety, were likewise burnt.

This service being effected, Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe rejoined Arnold at Richmond; where the public stores, and a large quantity of rum and salt the property of private individuals, were entirely destroyed. Leaving Richmond the next day, they arrived at Westover on the 7th; and re-embarking on the morning of the 10th, proceeded down the river. While the army lay at that place, Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe, at the head of less than fifty horse, attacked and dispersed a body of militia at Charles-city court-house, with the loss of only one man killed and three wounded.

The militia were now assembling in considerable

able numbers, but it was found difficult to arm them. While Baron Steuben followed Arnold down the river, Colonel Clarke drew a British party of about three hundred men into an ambuscade. After sun-set Lieutenant-colonel Simcoe, who commanded this party, had landed at Hoods; and perceiving a small body of Americans, who had been advanced for the purpose of tempting him to pursue them, followed with rapidity till he fell in with the detachment which Clarke had posted for his reception. One fire was given with some effect; but, on its being partially returned, the party which had formed the ambuscade broke, and fled in the utmost confusion.

Arnold proceeded slowly down the river, taking Smithfield and Mackay's Mills in his way, where some stores were destroyed; and on the 20th he reached Portsmouth, where he manifested an intention to establish a permanent post.

Finding himself unable to force this position, Steuben stationed his troops at the different commanding passes leading from it into the country; for the purpose of confining the enemy within the narrowest limits possible, and of giving every practicable protection to the inhabitants.

The loss of the British in this expedition was stated in the Gazette of New York at seven killed, including one subaltern; and twenty-three wounded, among whom was a captain. This small loss was

was almost entirely sustained in the ambuscade near Hoods.

In the north, the new year commenced with an alarming event, which, for a time, threatened the American cause with total ruin.

The accumulated sufferings and privations of the army have been repeatedly mentioned. They constitute a large and interesting portion of the history of that war which gave independance to the United States. It is impossible to appreciate the difficulties which were surmounted, or the relative merits of those who effected the revolution, without bearing in mind the continued sacrifices made by that generous portion of the American people, who, animated by the purest principles of real patriotism, under circumstances the most discouraging, persevered, with arms in their hands, in maintaining the rights asserted by their country. To them the winter brought not much relaxation from toil, and none from suffering. The soldiers were perpetually on the point of starving, were often entirely without food, were exposed without proper clothing to the rigours of winter, and had now served almost twelve months without pay.

This situation was common to the whole army, whether in the northern or southern service; and had been of such long continuance, that scarcely the hope of a change could be indulged. It was

not easy to persuade the military that their fellow-countrymen in civil life were unable to make greater exertions in support of the war, or that its burthens ought not to be more equally borne; of consequence, a considerable degree of discontent prevailed. This state of things produced unavoidably some relaxation of discipline; and the murmurs occasionally escaping the officers, sometimes overheard by the soldiers, were not without their influence.

In addition to the general causes of dissatisfaction, the Pennsylvania line, which had been stationed for the winter in the neighbourhood of Morris-town, complained heavily of a grievance almost peculiar to itself.

When Congress directed enlistments to be made for three years, or during the war, the recruiting officers of Pennsylvania, in some instances, instead of engaging their men definitely for one period or the other, engaged them generally for three years or the war. This ambiguity in the terms of enlistment, produced its natural effect. The soldier claimed his discharge at the expiration of three years, and the officer insisted on retaining him in service during the war. The imposition which the soldier believed to be practised on him was more reluctantly submitted to, as he constantly witnessed the immense bounties given to those who were not bound by a former enlistment.

The

The discontents which these various causes had been long fomenting, broke out on the night of the 1st of January, in an open and almost universal revolt of the line.

On a signal given, the great body of the non-commissioned officers and privates paraded under arms, avowing a determination to march to the seat of Congress, and obtain redress of their complicated grievances, without which they would serve no longer. Great exertions were made to suppress the mutiny. In the attempt, six or seven of the mutineers were wounded on the one side; and on the other a Captain Billing was killed, and several other officers were dangerously wounded. General Wayne endeavoured to use his authority, but soon found it of no avail. On cocking his pistol, and threatening some of the most turbulent, the bayonet was immediately presented to his bosom, and he perceived that strong measures would be only productive of his own destruction, and perhaps of the massacre of every officer in camp. A few regiments, who did not at first join the mutineers, were paraded by their officers; but had they even been willing to proceed to extremities, they were not strong enough to restore order. Infected quickly with the general contagion, or intimidated by the threats of the mutineers, they soon joined their comrades; and the whole body, consisting of about thirteen hundred men, with six field-pieces, marched towards Princetown.

In the few explanations which could be made under the circumstances preceding their march, they gave explicit assurances of a determination not to join the enemy; but were not less explicit in declaring their resolution to be amused no longer, but to obtain for themselves complete justice.

The next day General Wayne, accompanied by Colonels Butler and Stewart, two officers possessing in a high degree the affections of the soldiers, followed them in the hope of bringing them back to their duty, or at least of dividing them. They were overtaken near Middlebrook, the place where they designed to encamp for the night; and were invited by a written message from General Wayne, to appoint one man from each regiment, to state the grievances of which they complained.

In consequence of this invitation, a serjeant from each regiment met the officers at their quarters; and some verbal communications took place between them, from the complexion of which, sanguine hopes were entertained that the affair might be terminated without further hazard, or much injury to the service.

On the following day the march was resumed, and the soldiers proceeded to Princetown. They had organized themselves by choosing officers; and had appointed a British deserter, now a serjeant-major, named Williams, their commander.

The

The propositions of the general and field-officers were reported to them; and a committee of serjeants, who were appointed to take them into consideration, stated formally, in writing, all their claims. These were:

1. A discharge for all those who had served three years under their original engagements, whatever those engagements might have been, and who had not taken the increased bounty, and re enlisted for the war:
2. An immediate payment of all their arrears of pay and clothing, as well to those who should be discharged, as to those who should continue in service:
3. The residue of their bounty and future real pay to those who should remain in the army.

To these propositions the general answered, that settlements should be made with them, and certificates granted for their arrears of pay and clothing; and that those who were entitled to a discharge should receive it.

Not contented with the undefined promise of a discharge to "those who were entitled to it," they demanded an explanation, and insisted on including in the condition all those who had enlisted for the small bounties originally given.

To this General Wayne would not consent; and the subject was referred to the civil authority. On receiving the first intelligence of the mutiny, a committee

a committee of Congress was appointed to confer with the supreme executive of Pennsylvania respecting it. The result of this conference was, that both the committee and the governor, with some members of the executive council, left Philadelphia, for the purpose of endeavouring to accommodate this dangerous commotion.

The head-quarters of General Washington were at New Windsor on the North river. In the evening of the 3d of January, an aide-de-camp of General Wayne brought him intelligence of this alarming mutiny; and in a short time afterwards the terms demanded by the mutineers also reached him.

Accustomed as the commander in chief had been to contemplate hazardous and difficult situations, it was not easy, under these circumstances, to resolve at once on the course it was most prudent to pursue, or to execute with promptness and effect the measures which his judgment might dictate.

His first impression, to repair to the camp of the mutineers, and to endeavour, by the weight of his personal authority, to recall them to a sense of their duty, soon gave place to opinions which were formed on more mature reflection. It was almost certain that the business was now in the hands of the civil authority, with whose arrangements it might be improper for him to interfere.

Independant

Independant of this consideration, other motives of irresistible influence detained him on the North river.

The most important among those subjects of complaint which were alleged as the causes of the mutiny, were true in point of fact, were common to the whole army, and were of a nature to disperse but too generally those seeds of disquiet which had attained their full growth and maturity in the Pennsylvania line. Strong symptoms of discontent had already been manifested; and it was therefore impossible to say with confidence in what degree the same temper existed among the other troops, or how far the contagion of example had or would spread.

The danger arising from this state of things was much increased by the circumstance that the river was perfectly open, and consequently afforded Sir Henry Clinton an easy and rapid transportation for his army to West Point, should the situation of its garrison invite an enterprise against that post.

In addition to this consideration, which manifested the necessity of Washington's remaining in the Highlands, it would increase the mischief, and might have a most pernicious influence on the discipline of the whole army, should the authority of the commander in chief be disregarded. He ought not to place himself in a situation where his orders

orders might be disobeyed with impunity; an event which there was certainly much cause to fear, should he repair to the camp of the mutineers, unattended by a military force adequate to the occasion.

Such a force he could not immediately command. His effectives in the Highlands amounted only to thirteen hundred and seventy-six men; and that whole division of the army, dispersed at various and distant stations, exclusive of the sick and those on furlough, did not exceed four thousand. Putting, therefore, the fidelity of the troops entirely out of the question, it was impracticable immediately to march with a force sufficient to reduce the Pennsylvania line, without leaving the Highlands undefended. Nor was it unworthy of consideration, that in the present situation of the mutineers, the probability of being attacked by such a force might drive them to the enemy, or disperse them; either of which events would deprive the army of a valuable part of its strength.

It was therefore thought most advisable to leave the negotiation in the hands of the civil authority, and to prepare for those measures which ought to be adopted in the event of its failure. This resolution was communicated to General Wayne: with a caution to regard the situation of the residue of the army in any concession which might be made; and with the advice to draw the mutineers,

if

if possible, over the Delaware, so as to render their communication with the enemy more difficult.

In the mean time, the governor of New York was requested to repair to head-quarters, in order to assist in drawing out the militia of that state, should the occasion require it; and the delicate business of sounding the dispositions of the soldiers on the North river was undertaken. For this latter object a council was called, consisting of the general officers and those commanding regiments. Their report of the temper of their troops was favourable; after which, a detachment of about eleven hundred men was ordered to be in readiness to move on a moment's warning. On the first notice of the mutiny, the militia of Jersey took the field, under General Dickinson: for the purpose of opposing any incursion which, during the present crisis, might be made into that state; and also of co-operating with any detachment of the regular troops which it might be found necessary to employ.

The first intelligence of this revolt was received by Sir Henry Clinton on the morning of the 3d, and he immediately took measures to avail himself of an event from which so much was to be expected. A large corps was instantly ordered to be in readiness to move on the shortest notice; and the next day three emissaries were dispatched with tempting offers to the revolters. These emissaries

saries were also instructed to invite them, for the purpose of continuing and completing the negotiation, to take a position behind the South river, where they should be effectually covered by detachments from New York. While these measures were taking, Sir Henry kept his eye on West Point; and held himself in readiness to strike at that place, should any movement on the part of General Washington open to him a prospect of success.*

He was unwilling to enter Jersey before the dispositions of the mutineers should be ascertained; lest such a movement, in the event of their remaining still hostile to the British interest, should drive them back to their duty.

His emissaries were immediately seized by the revolters; and their proposals communicated to General Wayne, with assurances of their being rejected, and of the utter detestation in which every idea of going over to the common enemy was held.

This favourable sympton, however, was not

* In his letter to Lord George Germaine, written on this subject, he says, "General Washington has not moved a man from his army as yet; and as it is probable their demands are nearly the same with the Pennsylvania line, it is not thought likely he will. I am, however, in a situation to avail myself of favourable events; but to stir before they offer, might mar all."

unattended

unattended by circumstances of suspicion. They retained the British emissaries in their own possession; and could not be prevailed on to cross the Delaware, or to march from Princetown, a position convenient for a revival of the intercourse with New York. They would not permit any of their former officers, other than those already mentioned, to enter their camp; and General St. Clair, the Marquis de la Fayette, and Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, were ordered immediately to leave Princetown.

Such was the state of things when the committee of Congress and President Reid, with a part of his executive council, arrived in the neighbourhood of the revolters. The former having delegated their powers to the latter, a conference was held with the serjeants, who now commanded. Immediately afterwards proposals were made, and were distributed among the troops for consideration. In these proposals the government offered.

1. To discharge all those who had enlisted indefinitely for three years or during the war; the fact to be examined into by three commissioners, to be appointed by the executive; and to be ascertained, where the original enlistment could not be produced, by the oath of the soldier:
2. To give immediate certificates for the depreciation

tion on their pay, and to settle the arrears as soon as circumstances would admit:

3. To furnish them immediately with certain specified articles of clothing, which were greatly wanted.

On receiving these propositions, the troops agreed to march to Trenton. At that place the terms offered by the civil authority were accepted; with the addition that three commissioners should also be deputed by the line, who, conjointly with those of the executive, should constitute the board authorised to determine what soldiers should be discharged: and thereupon the British emissaries were surrendered, who were tried, condemned, and immediately executed as spies.

Until the investigation should be made, and discharges given to those who should be found entitled to them, the serjeants retained the command. In consequence of the irksomeness of this state of things, the business advanced with so much precipitation, that before the enlistments themselves could be brought from the huts, almost the whole of the artillery, and of the five first regiments of infantry, were liberated on the testimony of their own oaths. The enlistments being then produced, it was found that not many of the remaining regiments had engaged on the terms which, under the compact, would entitle them to leave the service; and that of those actually dismissed, far the greater number

number were enlisted absolutely for the war. The discharges given, however, were not cancelled; and the few who were to be retained in service received furloughs for forty days, with directions, on the expiration of that time, to assemble at convenient specified places in Pennsylvania, where officers were to meet, and to take command of them.

Thus ended, in a temporary dissolution of the whole line of Pennsylvania, a mutiny, which a voluntary performance of much less than was now extorted would have prevented; and which, in the actual condition of the army, was of a nature and extent to inspire the most serious alarm.

The dangerous policy of yielding even to the just demands of soldiers made with arms in their hands (a policy resulting, perhaps inevitably, from an original denial of justice) was soon illustrated. The success of the Pennsylvania line inspired a part of that of Jersey, many of whom were also foreigners, with the hope of obtaining similar advantages, and stimulated them to the attempt. On the night of the 20th a part of the Jersey brigade, which had been stationed at Pompton, rose in arms; and, making precisely the same claims which had been yielded to the Pennsylvanians, marched to Chatham, where a part of the same brigade had been stationed, in the hope of exciting them also to join in the revolt.

General Washington, who, though satisfied with

with the conduct both of the civil and military officers, had been extremely chagrined at the issue of the mutiny in the Pennsylvania line; and who was now confident of the reliance to be placed in the fidelity of the eastern troops, who were composed of natives; determined by strong measures to stop the further progress of a spirit which threatened the destruction of the army. In pursuance of this determination, he immediately ordered a detachment to march against the mutineers, and to bring them to unconditional submission. General Howe, who commanded this detachment, was instructed to make no terms with the insurgents while they had arms in their hands, or were in a state of resistance; and as soon as they should surrender, to seize a few of the most active leaders, and execute them on the spot.

These orders being promptly and implicitly obeyed, the Jersey mutineers were compelled to return to their duty.

In the hope of being more successful with the revolters of Jersey than he had been with those of Pennsylvania, Sir Henry Clinton offered them the same terms which had before been proposed to the mutineers at Princetown; and General Robertson, at the head of three thousand men, was detached to Staten Island, with the avowed purpose of crossing over into Jersey, and covering any movements

ments which they might make towards New York. The emissary employed proved to be in the American interest; and he delivered his papers to Colonel Dayton, the officer commanding at the first station to which he came. Other papers were dispersed among the mutineers, promising considerable rewards to every soldier who would join the British troops when landed at Elizabeth-town; but the mutiny was crushed so suddenly as to allow no time for the operation of these propositions.

The vigorous steps taken in this instance were happily followed by such an attention on the part of the states to the actual situation of the army, as checked the further progress of discontent. Influenced by the representations of the commander in chief, they raised three months pay in specie, which they forwarded to the soldiers, either as a donation, or in part discharge of the depreciation on their pay. This small pittance was received with joy, and was considered by the military as an evidence that the civil authority was not entirely unmindful of their sufferings.

Although the army was thus reduced to such an extremity of distress by the scantiness of their supplies, as threatened the most alarming consequences, the discontents of the people were daily multiplied by the contributions which they were required to make, and by the irritating manner in which

which those contributions were drawn from them. Every article for public use was obtained by impressment; and the taxes, being chiefly specific, were either unpaid, or collected by means which had the appearance of being coercive. Strong representations were made against this system, and committees were in some places set on foot to express the public complaints. The dissatisfaction, therefore, which pervaded the mass of the community, was scarcely less dangerous than that which had been manifested by the army.

To the judicious patriots throughout America, the necessity of giving greater powers to the federal head became every day more apparent. The mutiny of so large a portion of the army, and the continuance of the causes which produced that mutiny, manifested the impracticability, in point of fact, of continuing the war much longer, if the resources of the country were entirely controled by thirteen independant sovereignties. But the efforts of enlightened individuals were too weak to correct that fatal disposition of power which had been made in the first instance, and the impolicy of which was now in vain manifested by experience.

To relieve the United States from the various and complicated embarrassments in which they were entangled by the continuance of the war, a foreign loan seemed an expedient of indispensable necessity; and it was only from France that they could hope to obtain it.

For

For this interesting service, and to urge the advantage of maintaining a naval superiority in the American seas, Congress selected Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, a gentleman whose situation in the family of the commander in chief had enabled him to take a comprehensive view of the military capacities and weaknesses of his country.

Before his departure, Colonel Laurens passed some days at head-quarters; and received from General Washington, in the form of a letter, the result of his reflections on the existing state of things.

This paper, which was given while the line of Pennsylvania was yet in open revolt, is a document on which Americans will look with some interest; because it is a faithful portrait of the critical situation of their country, drawn with equal temper and intelligence.

"Although some errors in financial arrangements were to have been expected, from the total inexperience of America in the affairs of government, at the commencement of hostilities with Great Britain, which might in some degree have increased the public embarrassments; yet it was not to them, he conceived, that those embarrassments were principally to be attributed. The efforts unavoidably made in the prosecution of the war had greatly exceeded the natural ability of the country; and it had now become impossible for

the United States, by any interior exertions, to extricate themselves from their present difficulties, by restoring public credit, and furnishing the funds requisite for the support of the war. According to the best estimates, any revenue which the states were capable of raising, would be found inadequate to the expences of the war, and would leave a large surplus to be supplied by credit.

" Experience had proved, that a paper-system could not be supported without funds; and domestic loans could not be made to any considerable extent, not only on account of the instability of the currency, but also because there were but few monied men in America.

" The United States had, therefore, been compelled to resort to a mode of supporting the war, so dissatisfactory to the people, that there was reason to apprehend the evils actually felt in its prosecution might weaken those sentiments which began it. Yet, so insufficient were the supplies, that, from an almost uninterrupted series of complicated distress, the patience of the army was now nearly exhausted, and their discontents matured to an extremity, which had recently produced very disagreeable consequences, and which demonstrated the absolute necessity of speedy relief; 'a relief not within the compass of our means.'

" From this statement he deduced the vital importance of an immediate and ample supply of money,

money, which might be the foundation for substantial arrangements of finance, for reviving public credit, and giving vigour to future operations; as well as of a decided effort of the allied arms on the continent, to effect in the ensuing campaign the great objects of the alliance.

"Next to a supply of money, he considered a naval superiority in the American seas as an object of the deepest interest. To the United States it would be of decisive importance; and France also might derive great advantages from transferring the maritime war to the coast of her ally. She would find numerous friendly ports that were closed against her enemy; and might readily, and safely, obtain abundant supplies of articles for repairing her fleets, and subsisting her seamen, from which the British would be in a great measure excluded.

"The future capacities of the United States to repay any loan which might now be made, were displayed; and he concluded with assurances, that there was still a fund of inclination and resource in the country equal to great and continued exertions, provided the means were offered of stopping the progress of disgust, by changing the present system, and adopting another more consonant with the spirit of the nation, and more capable of infusing activity and energy into public measures; of which a powerful succour in money must be the

basis. The people were discontented; but it was with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself."

With reason did the commander in chief thus urge on the cabinet of Versailles the policy of advancing to the United States a sum of money which might be adequate to the present exigency. Seldom had their political horizon been overcast with a deeper gloom.

In possession of South Carolina and of Georgia, Lord Cornwallis had over-run the greater part of North Carolina also; and it was with infinite hazard and address, that Greene maintained himself on the northern frontier of that state.

A second detachment from New York was now making a deep impression on Virginia, where the resistance was neither so prompt, nor so vigorous, as the strength of that state, and the unanimity of its citizens, had given reason to expect.

The army was reduced to a state of deplorable weakness; and the remnant of it which still existed was unpaid, unclothed, and often unfed. Under the pressure of these complicated sufferings, a considerable portion of the soldiery had been already in open revolt; and it was not easy to say with confidence, how long the patriotism of the residue might support them under such trying circumstances.

The perplexities and difficulties in which the affairs

affairs of America were involved, could not be concealed from the enemy. The British government estimated them even above their real value, and counted with confidence on the speedy conquest of the whole country west and south of the Hudson. Intercepted letters of this date from the minister expressed the most sanguine hopes, that the great superiority of force at the disposal of Sir Henry Clinton, would compel Washington, with his feeble army, to take refuge on the eastern side of that river. Even Congress relaxed, for an instant, the firmness which had uniformly distinguished that body, and receded from the decisive manner in which they had insisted on the rights appertaining to the territory of their country.

It will be recollected, that France and Spain contemplated the western claims of the United States with much solicitude; and had manifested no inconsiderable degree of earnestness to restrict them on that frontier within narrow limits, and to exclude them entirely from the Mississippi.

From her jealousy on this and other subjects, Spain, though engaged in the war, had held herself aloof from the United States; and had refused to contract any alliance with them, or intimately to blend their interests with hers.

In the present inauspicious state of public affairs, Congress, for the first time, manifested a disposition to sacrifice remote interests, though of great future

future magnitude, for immediate advantages; and directed their minister at Madrid to relinquish, if it should be absolutely necessary, the claims of the United States to navigate the Mississippi below the 31st degree of north latitude, and to a free port on the banks of that river, within the Spanish territory. It is remarkable, that only Massachussetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina, dissented from this resolution: New York was divided. On a subsequent day, when the impression produced by the present unpromising appearance had in some degree worn off, the subject was again brought forward, and a proposition was made for still further concessions to Spain in that quarter; but on discussion, this proposition was unanimously negatived.

Happily for the United States, Mr. Jay, their minister at the court of Madrid, required, as the price of the concessions which he was instructed to make, that the treaty he was labouring to negotiate should be immediately concluded between the two nations. Without obtaining this object, he declared that he would surrender no privileges claimed by America; nor should his government be bound in future by the offers now made. His conduct received the entire approbation of Congress.

Inseparably connected with the restoration of credit, was the establishment of a revenue subject

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to the exclusive direction of the continental government. The efforts therefore which were made to retrieve their affairs by the negotiation of a foreign loan, were accompanied by resolutions, calling on the respective states to vest in Congress a fund which should be both permanent and productive. A duty on imports and on prize goods, would obviously constitute the most eligible and certain fund. A resolution therefore passed, recommending the respective states to vest a power in Congress to levy, for the use of the union, a duty of five *per centum ad valorem* on all goods, wares, and merchandizes, of foreign growth and manufacture imported into any of them; and also on all prizes, and prize-goods, condemned in any of the American courts of admiralty. This fund was to be appropriated to the payment of both the principal and interest of all debts contracted in the prosecution of the war, and was to continue till those debts should be completely discharged.

There were several persons at that time in Congress, who perceived the advantages which would result from bestowing on the federal head the full power of regulating commerce, and consequently of increasing the import as circumstances might render advisable; but state influence predominated, and they were over-ruled by great majorities. Even the inadequate plan which they did recommend, was never adopted. Notwithstanding the greatness

greatness of the exigency, the pressure of the national wants, and the beneficial influence which a certain revenue in the hands of government would obviously have upon the war; yet never, during the existence of the confederation, did all the states unite to vest in Congress the powers now required: so unwilling are men possessed of power, to place it in the hands of others; and so difficult is it to effect any objects, however important, which are dependant on the concurrent assent of many distinct sovereigntics.

About the same time, a reform was introduced into the administration, the necessity of which had long been perceived by the intelligent and thinking part of America. From an ill-judged prejudice against institutions which had been sanctioned by experience, all the great executive duties had heretofore devolved, either on committees of Congress, or on boards consisting of several members. This unwieldy and expensive system had maintained itself against all the efforts of reason and public utility. But the scantiness of the national means at length surmounted the prejudices which had so long prevailed; the several committees and boards yielded to a secretary for foreign affairs, a superintendant of finance, a secretary of war, and a secretary of marine. But so miserably defective was the organization of Congress as an executive body, that the year had far advanced before

before this measure, the utility of which all acknowledged, could be carried into complete operation by making all the appointments.

It was about this time that the articles of confederation were agreed to. Much difficulty was experienced in obtaining the ratification of this instrument. Various amendments, in some instances contradictory to each other, were proposed by the states respectively, but they successively yielded to the opinion that a federal compact would be of vast importance in the prosecution of the war. One impediment, however, it was found difficult to remove. Within the chartered limits of several states were immense tracts of vacant territory, which, it was supposed, would constitute a large fund of future wealth. The states not possessed of that advantage, insisted on considering this territory as a joint acquisition, which should be applied to the common benefit. At length this difficulty also was surmounted; and in February 1781, to the great joy of America, this interesting compact was rendered complete. Yet, like many other human institutions, it was productive, neither in war nor in peace, of all the benefits which its sanguine advocates had expected. It is not impossible, that had peace been restored to America before any agreement for a permanent union was entered into, the different parts might have fallen asunder, and an entire dismemberment have

have taken place. If the confederation really preserved the idea of union till the good sense of the nation adopted some more efficient system, and even if no other advantage has been derived from it, this alone is certainly sufficient to entitle the measure to the respectful recollection of the American people, and its projectors to their gratitude.

Such was the defensive strength of the positions taken by the adverse armies on the Hudson, and such the force which they respectively possessed, that no decisive blow could be given or received in that quarter of the continent. To the south, therefore, the anxious attentions of General Washington were unremittingly directed. One of those incidents which fortune occasionally produces, and on the seizing or neglect of which the greatest military events not unfrequently depend, presented, sooner than was expected, an opportunity which the general deemed capable of being improved for the destruction of the British army in Virginia.

From its first arrival on the American coast, the French fleet had been blocked up in the harbour of Newport; and the land forces belonging to that nation had been reduced to a state of total inactivity, by the necessity of maintaining a position which would enable them to co-operate with their ships for their mutual defence. On the east end of Long Island, late in January, a detachment from the British fleet was encountered by a violent storm,

storm, in which such damage was sustained as to destroy for a time the naval superiority which Arbuthnot had uniformly preserved. The Culloden, a seventy-four, was lost: the Bedford, carrying the same number of guns, was dismasted; and the America, a sixty-four, was driven out to sea.

This casualty gave a temporary superiority to Monsieur Destouches. Having been requested by the Chevalier de la Luzerne to afford to Virginia any aid which his situation might enable him to give, he resolved to avail himself of the favourable moment to detach a ship of the line and two frigates to the Chesapeak; a force which the delegation from that state had assured him was sufficient for the object. On receiving the first certain accounts of the loss sustained in the storm, General Washington conceived the design of improving that circumstance, by immediate and powerful operations against Arnold. He was conscious that these operations could not be carried on by the militia of the state alone, or without a union of land and naval force; and that the critical moment must be seized or the enterprize would fail. Without wasting time, therefore, in waiting till a system of co-operation should be digested, he ordered a detachment of twelve hundred men, under the command of the Marquis de la Fayette, to be drawn from the lines of New England and New Jersey, for the purpose of marching

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to the head of the Chesapeak; there to embark for that part of Virginia which was to become the theatre of action, under convoy of a French frigate, which he expected to obtain from the admiral. Letters were also addressed to the Baron Steuben, and to Governor Jefferson, requesting the most immediate preparations to be made, for the purpose of giving to the expedition every aid which the state could furnish; and especially desiring them to dispatch the most experienced pilots to the fleet, the arrival of which might be daily expected. He immediately communicated this measure to the Count de Rochambeau, and to Monsieur Destouches; to whom he also stated his conviction that no serious advantage could be expected from detaching to the Chesapeak a few vessels, unaided by troops. "There were," he said, "a variety of positions to be taken by Arnold (one of which was Portsmouth, his present station) where his ships might be so protected by his batteries on the shore, as to defy a mere naval attack; and where he would certainly be able to maintain himself till the losses sustained in the late storm should be repaired, and the superiority at sea recovered, when he would unquestionably be relieved. There was, therefore, no prospect of effecting any thing considerable with such a force, unless the ships detached should have the good-fortune to fall in with him unexpectedly, in the very moment when

embarked

embarked to proceed from one place to another. To ensure the success of the expedition, he recommended that the whole fleet should be employed on it, and that a detachment of one thousand men should be embarked for the same service. Although Arnold's fortifications could not be considerable, yet they might be sufficient to resist, till he could be relieved, all the efforts which an inferior regular force, however aided by militia, might make against them; but if the continental troops under the Marquis should be joined by a force of one thousand French infantry, with a proper train of artillery, his ruin must be certain and immediate."

These representations of the commander in chief did not prevail. The original plan had already been put in execution. On the 9th of February a sixty-four gun ship, with two frigates, under Monsieur de Tilly, had sailed for the Chesapeak; and as the America had now returned, and the Bedford had been new-masted, the French admiral did not deem it prudent to put to sea with the residue of the fleet.

As had been foreseen by General Washington, Monsieur de Tilly found Arnold in a situation not to be assailed with any prospect of success. After showing himself therefore in the bay, and making an ineffectual attempt to enter Elizabeth river, he returned to Newport. At the Capes he fell in with

with and captured the Romulus, a fifty-gun frigate, coming from Charlestown to the Chesapeak.

Both the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier Destouches were well disposed to execute the plans suggested by General Washington. When, therefore, Monsieur de Tilly with his squadron, strengthened by the Romulus, rejoined the fleet at Newport, those officers determined on a second expedition to the Chesapeak, with the whole fleet and eleven hundred men.

General Washington therefore repeated his orders to the Marquis de la Fayette to continue his march to the southward, and hastened to Newport, that, in a personal conference with the commanders of the land and naval forces of France, he might facilitate the execution of an enterprise, from which even yet he entertained sanguine hopes. He supposed that ships, judiciously stationed within the Chesapeak, might defend its entrance against a superior naval force; and therefore deemed it essential to the success of the expedition, to use the utmost dispatch, in order to pre-occupy the bay.

Early on the 6th of March he reached Newport, and went instantly on board the French admiral, where he was met by the Count de Rochambeau. It was there determined, that a detachment from the army, then in perfect readiness, should be embarked under the Count de Viominil, and that the fleet

fleet should put to sea as soon as possible. The wind was favourable to the French, and adverse to the British, who lay in Gardner's bay. Yet the fleet did not sail till the evening of the 8th. It appears from a letter of Monsieur Destouches, that this delay was in some measure attributable to a disaster which befel one of his frigates in getting out of port, and there is reason to suppose that it may be ascribed to a want of supplies. Whatever may have occasioned it, the effect most probably was, that Arnold escaped a fate well merited by his treason.*

Two days after Destouches had sailed, he was followed by Arbuthnot, who overtook him on the 16th off the Capes of Virginia. After some manœuvring, a partial engagement ensued, which commenced a few minutes after two in the afternoon, and continued about an hour, when the fleets were separated. The next day the French admiral called a council of war, in which it was declared unadvisable to renew the action; and he returned to Newport.

In this engagement the hostile fleets were nearly equal to each other; the English having a small superiority in the number of guns, which the

* General Washington had instructed La Fayette not to grant Arnold any terms which should secure him from the punishment due to his crimes.

French

French counterbalanced by men. Each party claimed the advantage; but the substantial benefits of victory were unquestionably obtained by the English. They entirely defeated an enterprise from which they had much to fear.

It was, however, a cause of triumph to the allies, that a naval action had been fought in which the French, without a superiority of force, had maintained an equality of fortune; and the Chevalier Destouches received on the occasion the congratulations of the commander in chief, and the thanks of Congress.

La Fayette had embarked his detachment at the head of Elk, and had proceeded with it to Annapolis in Maryland, where it waited for a frigate from the French squadron to convoy it to Virginia.

The rencounter of the fleets, and the consequent return of Destouches to Newport, having rendered the object of the expedition unattainable, La Fayette re-embarked his detachment for the head of Elk, at which place he received orders to join the southern army.

Before obtaining intelligence that the naval action of the 16th had restored to the British admiral the superiority at sea, two thousand troops, commanded by General Phillips, embarked at New York for Portsmouth, and arrived on the 26th of March in the Chesapeak. This powerful reinforcement gave the British a decided superiority

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in Virginia over any military force which could be brought to oppose them; and changed the destination of La Fayette, to whom the defence of that state was now committed.

The troops under his command had been taken chiefly from the eastern regiments, and had imbibed strong prejudices against a southern climate. The service on which they were detached was not expected to be of long duration, and they were consequently unprepared for a campaign in a district where no relief to the most pressing wants could be procured.

From these causes, desertion became so frequent as to threaten the dissolution of the corps. This unpromising state of things was completely changed by a happy expedient adopted by La Fayette. Appealing to the generous and honourable principles of his soldiers, principles on which the feelings of his own bosom taught him to rely, he proclaimed in orders that he was about to enter on an enterprise of great difficulty and danger, in which he persuaded himself that his soldiers would not abandon him. If, however, any individual of the detachment was unwilling to accompany him, he was invited to apply for a permit to return to his regiment, which should most assuredly be granted. This measure produced the desired effect. The disgrace of applying to be excused from a service full of hazard, was too great to be encountered;

and a total stop was immediately put to desertion. To keep up the good dispositions of the moment, this ardent young nobleman, who was as unmindful of fortune as he was ambitious of fame, borrowed from the merchants of Baltimore, on his private credit, a sum of money sufficient to purchase shoes, linen, spirits, and other articles of immediate necessity, for the detachment.*

Having made these preparations for the campaign, he marched with the utmost celerity to the defence of Virginia. That state was in great need of assistance. The enemy had penetrated deep into its bosom, and was practising on its inhabitants those excesses which will ever be experienced by a country unable to repel invasion.

On his arrival, General Phillips took command of all the British troops in Virginia; and, after employing some time in completing the fortifications of Portsmouth, he commenced his offensive operations.

About two thousand five hundred men were embarked on board the smallest vessels of his fleet, and, proceeding up James river, landed at various

* It is not unworthy of notice, that the ladies of Baltimore charged themselves with the toil of immediately making up the summer clothes for the troops. Innumerable instances of their zeal in the common cause of their country were given by the fair sex in every state of the union.

places

places in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg. Different detachments spread themselves over the lower part of that neck of land which lies between York and James rivers; and after destroying, without opposition, a ship-yard belonging to the state, with some armed vessels, and public stores, the troops re-embarked, and proceeded towards City Point, where they landed in the afternoon of the 24th of April. The next day they marched against Petersburg, where immense quantities of tobacco and other stores were deposited.

Baron Steuben, the commanding officer in Virginia, was not in a situation to check their progress. The regular force of that state had marched to the aid of General Greene; and the whole number of militia at that time in the field did not much exceed two thousand men. With these, if even collected at one point, no serious resistance could be made; and the certain consequences of risking an action would be the loss of arms, and the still greater discouragement of the country. Yet he was unwilling to abandon so important a place as Petersburg, without the semblance of fighting; and therefore the troops in that quarter, amounting to about one thousand men, were posted a mile below the town, with orders to skirmish with the enemy. The disposition made by the Baron is said to have been well calculated for the object contemplated; and the British troops,

without having been able to bring him to a close engagement, were two or three hours employed in driving him across the Appomatox, the bridge over which being taken up as soon as the militia had passed it, a further pursuit became impracticable.

This skirmish having terminated with scarcely any loss on either side, the Baron retreated towards Richmond, and Phillips took quiet possession of Petersburg; where, without further molestation, he destroyed a considerable quantity of tobacco, and all the vessels lying in the river.

This service being accomplished, Arnold was detached to Osborne's, a small village on the south side of James river, fifteen miles below the metropolis; while Phillips marched to Chesterfield courthouse, which had been the place of rendezvous for the new levies of Virginia, where he destroyed the barracks, with a few public stores that had not been removed.

At Warwick, nearly half-way between Osborne's and Richmond, a respectable naval force, consisting of small armed vessels, had been collected with the intention of co-operating with the French fleet against Portsmouth; and a few militia were stationed on the northern bank of the river, to assist in defending the fleet. On being summoned to surrender, the commodore answered, "that he was determined to defend himself to the last extremity."

tremity." Two six and two three-pounders were immediately brought down to the bank, where it was nearly on a level with the water, and within one hundred yards of the nearest armed ship of the American flotilla. After firing a few shot, the vessels were scuttled and set on fire; and their crews escaped to the opposite shore, and dispersed with the militia.

On the 30th of April a junction was formed, in the neighbourhood of Warwick, between Phillips and Arnold: after which they marched without interruption to Manchester, a small town on the southern bank of James river, immediately opposite to Richmond; where, as was the general practice, the warehouses were set on fire, and all the tobacco consumed.

On the preceding evening, the Marquis de la Fayette, who had made a forced march from Baltimore, fortunately arrived with his detachment at Richmond; and that place, in which a great proportion of the military stores of the state was then collected, was saved, for the present, from a visit which was certainly designed.

The regular troops detached under the marquis were joined by about two thousand militia, and sixty dragoons. Not thinking it advisable to attempt the passage of the river in the face of so considerable an army, General Phillips marched back to Bermuda Hundred, a point of land in the confluence

confluence of James river and the Appomatox, destroying in his way property to an immense amount. At that place he re-embarked his troops, and fell down as far as Hog Island, which was reached by the van of his fleet on the 5th of May.

Detaching small parties to watch the motions of the enemy, the marquis fixed his head-quarters on the north of Chicahoming, about eighteen miles from Richmond, where he remained till a letter from Lord Cornwallis called Phillips again up James river.

When that nobleman determined on marching from Wilmington into Virginia, at the head of less than two thousand men, he signified his wish that the British troops in that state, who had been placed under his command, should take their station at Petersburg.

On the 7th of May Phillips received this letter, and immediately prepared to comply with the request which it contained.

As soon as the fleet moved up the river, La Fayette returned to the defence of Richmond. Having on his arrival received intelligence that Cornwallis was marching northward, and finding Phillips landed at Brandon on the south side of the river, he was persuaded that a junction of the two armies was intended, and hastened to take possession of Petersburg before Phillips could reach that place. In this, however, he was anticipated. The

march

march of that general was so rapid, and he entered Petersburg so unexpectedly, that he surprised and seized a party of officers, some of whom had been sent forward to collect boats for the use of the American army.

Being thus disappointed in the design of taking a position which might have enabled him, in some degree, to retard the junction of Lord Cornwallis with General Phillips; and having found, on reconnoitring the British army, that every part of it was unassailable by the force under his command; he re-crossed James river, and, encamping a few miles below Richmond, used his utmost exertions to remove the military stores to a place of greater security.

In this position his army was permitted to repose itself but a few days. Lord Cornwallis had moved from Wilmington about the end of April, and reached Petersburg in less than a month, without having encountered any serious opposition. On his arrival he took the command of the whole army; which, by the death of General Phillips on the 13th of May, had devolved on General Arnold.

Finding himself at the head of a force which nothing in Virginia could resist, this active officer instantly determined on a vigorous plan of offensive operations. His immediate object was to bring the Marquis to an action, which must certainly terminate in the defeat of that officer.

For

For this purpose he put his troops in motion without delay; and crossing James river at Westover, where he was joined by a reinforcement which had lately arrived from New York, he attempted, by turning the left flank of the American army, to get into its rear. La Fayette was in no condition to risk an engagement. The native ardour of his temper, and the reluctance with which he exposed himself to the charge of giving up the country without even an attempt to save it by an action, required all the vigilance of his judgment to restrain him from hazarding more than his present situation would justify. On his part, the immediate objects to be effected were, the security of the public stores, the preservation of his small army for future service, and a junction with the Pennsylvania line, which was on its march to the southward, under the command of General Wayne.

The most valuable stores having now been removed from Richmond, that post was no longer important, and the Marquis abandoned it as Lord Cornwallis crossed James river. He retired towards the upper country; inclining his route to the north, in order to favour the contemplated junction with Wayne.

The number of fine horses which were found in the stables of private gentlemen, gave to the British general an efficient cavalry; and enabled him

him to mount so many of his infantry, as to move large detachments with unusual rapidity. Possessing these advantages, he was so confident of overtaking and of destroying the army of the Marquis, as to say exultingly, in a letter which was afterwards intercepted, "The boy cannot escape me." His sanguine hopes however were disappointed. La Fayette, who was joined by several troops of well-mounted volunteer cavalry from Virginia and Maryland, moved with so much celerity and caution, as to convince Cornwallis of the impracticability of overtaking him, or of preventing his junction with Wayne.

After having marched for some distance up the northern side of the Northanna, his lordship relinquished the pursuit, and turned his attention to objects of less magnitude, which were supposed to be more attainable.

Military stores, indispensable to the prosecution of the southern war, had been collected in various parts of the upper country; and among others at the point of Fork, a point of land made by the confluence of the Rivanna and Fluvanna, the two branches of James river. This post was protected by between five and six hundred from the new levies, who had marched to the borders of North Carolina under Baron Steuben, for the purpose of joining General Greene, but had returned on finding that Lord Cornwallis was about to enter Virginia.

ginia. This detachment had halted at the point of Fork, where the militia on the south side of James river had been directed to join them. Against this place Colonel Simcoe was detached with five hundred men.

At the same time, an expedition was also planned against Charlotteville, where the general assembly had convened, and was employed in digesting schemes for the further prosecution of the war. This last expedition was entrusted to Colonel Tarleton; and the detachment employed on it, consisting of two hundred and fifty men, was composed entirely of cavalry and mounted infantry.

So rapid were the movements of Tarleton, that a mere accident prevented his entering the town before any notice of his approach was given. A private gentleman,* on a very fleet horse, who suspected his object, and was acquainted with a nearer route than the great road, hastened to Charlotteville with the interesting intelligence, and entered the town about two hours before the British cavalry. Nearly all the members of the legislature made their escape and re-assembled at Staunton, on the western side of the Blue-ridge. Only seven of them fell into the hands of Tarleton. After destroying the stores at Charlotteville, he proceeded down the Rivanna to the point of Fork.

* Mr. Jouiette.

The

The detachment commanded by Simcoe, being composed chiefly of infantry, could not move with equal celerity. That able officer, however, conducted his march with so much secrecy and address, that Steuben seems to have been either totally unapprised of his approach, or to have had no accurate information of his numbers.

Intelligence of the expedition to Charlotteville had reached him, and he had prudently employed himself in removing his stores from the point of Fork to the south side of the Fluvanna.

The river, having been raised by the fall of rain, was unfordable; and the boats were all secured on its southern bank. Yet Steuben, suspecting the party under Simcoe to be the van of the British army, withdrew precipitately in the night, and marched near thirty miles from the point of Fork, leaving behind him such stores as could not be removed. These were destroyed the next morning by a small detachment who crossed the river in a few canoes.

To secure his junction with Wayne, and to keep open the communication towards the north, La Fayette found it necessary to cross the Rapidan. The waters of this river were raised by the heavy rains which fell about that time, so as to render its passage extremely difficult to the enemy.

These movements of the two armies had thrown Cornwallis completely between La Fayette and the military

military stores; which had been transported from Richmond up James river, and deposited at different places, but principally at Albemarle old court-house, high up the Fluvanna, on the south side of that river.

To avail himself of this position, Lord Cornwallis turned to the south; and, recrossing the Pamunky, directed his march up James river towards Albemarle old court-house.

The Marquis had now effected a junction with the Pennsylvania line, consisting of eight hundred men. Emboldened by this reinforcement, he recrossed the Rapidan; and advanced with so much celerity towards the British army, that he encamped within a few miles of them, when they were yet upwards of a day's march from their point of destination.

Lord Cornwallis still possessed a decided superiority; and as he was confident that the object of the American general must necessarily be to protect the magazines on the Fluvanna, he encamped at Elk Island, and advanced his light troops to a position commanding the road by which it was supposed that the Americans must pass. From this disposition of his force, he promised himself the advantage of obliging his enemy either to risk a general action, or to expose his left flank to ruin.

La Fayette, however, discovered, and opened in the night, a road which was nearer, but had long

long been disused; and the next morning, when the British general expected to seize his prey, he had the mortification to perceive that the American army had crossed the Rivanna, and taken a strong position behind Mechunck creek. This position, which in a great measure commanded the route leading from the camp of his lordship to Albemarle old court-house, could not be attacked but with disadvantage. At this place too a strong reinforcement of militia was received.

Apprehending the force opposed to him to be greater than it was in reality, Lord Cornwallis abandoned the objects he had pursued, and retired first to Richmond, and afterwards to Williamsburg. It is not improbable, that on perceiving the difficulties to be encountered near the mountains, where even a victory might be attended with no decisive consequences, he chose to transfer the war to the lower country, the face of which was more favourable to his views.

The Marquis followed with cautious circumspection, taking care to keep the command of the upper country, and to avoid a general engagement. On the 18th of June, while in the neighbourhood of Richmond, he was reinforced by Baron Steuben, with four or five hundred new levies. His army was now increased to four thousand men, of whom two thousand were regulars; but only one thousand five hundred of them were disciplined troops.

That

That of Lord Cornwallis was probably rather more numerous, was composed entirely of veterans, and was furnished with a powerful and well-mounted cavalry, who had spread terror and desolation through the country, and had greatly intimidated the militia.

As the British army retreated to Williamsburg, La Fayette, who sought a partial, though he avoided a general engagement, kept his main body at the distance of about twenty miles; while his light parties pressed on their rear, which was covered by a strong corps commanded by Colonel Simcoe.

That officer was overtaken by Colonel Butler, about six miles from Williamsburg; and a sharp action ensued, attended with loss on both sides. The Americans claimed the advantage; but they were obliged to retire by the approach of the whole British army, which moved out to protect their rear. After this skirmish, the Marquis encamped about twenty miles above Williamsburg, in a secure position, near James river, interposing the Chiccahominy between him and the enemy.

In the bold and rapid course taken by Lord Cornwallis through the lower and central parts of Virginia, much private as well as public property *

* While the British army over-ran the country, their ships sailed up the rivers, pillaged the farms, received the negroes who fled from their masters, and in some instances reduced the

was destroyed. The tobacco, especially, was every where committed to the flames, and the resources of the state were considerably diminished: but no solid advantage was obtained, from which a reasonable expectation might be indulged that any considerable progress had been made in accomplishing the great object of the war. Although,

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the houses to ashes. While they were in the Potomac, a flag was sent on shore at Mount Vernon, requiring a supply of fresh provisions. The steward of General Washington, believing it to be his duty to save the property of his principal, and entertaining fears for the magnificent buildings of the commander in chief, went on board with the flag, carried a supply of fresh provisions, asked the restoration of the slaves who had taken refuge in the fleet, and requested that the buildings and improvements might be spared. Mr. Lund Washington, to whose care the General had entrusted the management of his estate, immediately communicated these circumstances to him; and at the same time informed him, that he too had sustained considerable losses. "I am sorry," said the General in reply, "to hear of your loss; I am a little sorry to hear of my own. But that which gives me most concern is, that you should have gone on board the vessels of the enemy, and furnished them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me, to have heard that, in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my house, and laid the plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative; and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshment to them, with a view to prevent a conflagration."

from

from various causes, especially from a want of arms, and from that general repugnance to the service which a harassed unpaid militia must be expected to manifest, less resistance was encountered than the strength and population of the state had rendered probable; yet no disposition was openly manifested, except in a remote quarter,* to join the royal standard, or to withdraw from the contest. The Marquis complained of "much slowness, and much carelessness in the country; but the dispositions of the people," he said, "were good, and they required only to be awakened." This, he thought, would be best effected by the presence of General Washington; an event for which he expressed the most anxious solicitude.

The governor also, with most of the members of Congress, as well as many other very respectable citizens, urged the commander in chief to the defence of his native state. But Washington, contemplating America as his country, and the general safety as his object, deemed it of the utmost importance to remain on the Hudson, for the purpose of digesting and conducting a grand plan of

* In the county of Hampshire some disposition to take up arms in support of the royal cause was discovered; but Morgan, whose ill health had forced him out of the army, immediately formed a body of mounted rifle men, at whose head he placed himself, and speedily reduced the malecontents to unconditional submission.

combined

combined operations, then meditated against New York.

By executing this plan, he counted more certainly on relieving the southern states, than by any other system of conduct it was then in his power to adopt.

An express carrying letters, which were designed to communicate to Congress the result of his consultations on this subject with the commanders of the land and naval forces of France, was intercepted in the Jerseys; and when brought before Sir Henry Clinton, his letters disclosed the views of the American general against the seat of the British power in the United States. This interesting discovery seems to have alarmed Sir Henry for the safety of New York, and to have determined him to require the return of a part of the troops in Virginia. Supposing himself too weak, after complying with this requisition, to remain at Williamsburg, Lord Cornwallis took the resolution of passing James river, and retiring to Portsmouth.

In pursuance of this resolution, he marched from Williamsburg, and encamped in such a manner as to cover a ford into the island of Jamestown; and, on the same evening, the Queen's Rangers crossed over into the island, and the two succeeding days were employed in carrying over the baggage.

 The

The morning after the evacuation of Williamsburg, La Fayette changed his position; and crossing the Chiccahoming, pushed his best troops within nine miles of the British camp, with the intention of attempting their rear when the main body should have passed into James-town.

Suspecting this design, Lord Cornwallis encamped the greater part of his army on the main land as compactly as possible; and displayed a few troops on the island, in such a manner as, in appearance, to magnify their numbers. All the intelligence received by La Fayette concurred in the representation, that the greater part of the British army had passed over into the island of James-town in the night. Believing this to be the fact, he detached some riflemen and militia on the 6th of July to harass their outposts, while he advanced at the head of the continental troops in order to cut off the rear should the intelligence he had received be well founded.

Every appearance was calculated to countenance the opinion which had been formed. The British light parties were all drawn in, and the piquets, which lay close to the encampment, were forced by the riflemen without much resistance. La Fayette, however, who arrived a little before sunset, determined to reconnoitre the camp, and judge of its strength from his own observation.

It was in a great degree concealed by woods; but,

but, from a tongue of land stretching into the river at no great distance, he soon perceived the British force to be much more considerable than had been apprehended, and hastened to call off his men. On his return he found Wayne closely engaged.

A piece of artillery had been left but weakly defended, which Wayne determined to seize, and Major Galvan was advanced for that purpose. Scarcely was the attempt made, when he discovered the whole army arranged in order of battle, moving out against him. A retreat was now impossible, and the boldest had become the safest measure: under this impression he advanced rapidly, and with his small detachment, not exceeding eight hundred men, made a gallant charge on the British line. A warm action ensued, which was kept up with great spirit for several minutes; when La Fayette, who had now come up, perceiving Wayne to be outflanked both on the right and left, ordered him to retreat, and form in a line with the light infantry, who were then drawn up about half a mile in his rear; after which the whole American force saved itself behind a morass.

Fortunately for La Fayette, Lord Cornwallis did not improve the advantage which he had gained.

Suspecting this to be a stratagem of the American general to draw him into an ambuscade, a suspicion equally favoured by the hardiness of the measure and the time of the attack, Lord Cornwallis, who still supposed the opposing army to be

much stronger than it was in reality, would admit of no pursuit; and in the course of the night crossed over into the island, whence he soon afterwards proceeded to Portsmouth.

In the American accounts of this action, the militia are not mentioned; nor is there any statement of their loss. The British represent a detachment of them to have been brought into the engagement, but to have been broken and driven off the field at its commencement. It appears from the returns, that one hundred and eighteen of the continental troops, among whom were ten officers, were killed, wounded, or taken, and two pieces of artillery were left on the field, the horses attached to them being killed. The British loss was less considerable. It is stated, in both killed and wounded, at five officers and about seventy privates.

All active operations were now for a time suspended; and the harassed army of La Fayette was permitted to repose itself.

Although no brilliant service was achieved by this young nobleman, the campaign in Virginia enhanced his military reputation, and raised him in the general esteem. That with so decided an inferiority of effective force, and especially of cavalry, he had been able to keep the field in an open country, and to preserve a great proportion of his military stores, as well as his army, was believed to furnish unequivocal evidence of the prudence and vigour of his conduct.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.

State of affairs at the beginning of the year 1781—Superintendant of finances appointed—Designs of General Washington against New York—Count Rochambeau marches to the North River—Intelligence from the Count de Grasse—Plan of operations against Lord Cornwallis—Naval engagement—The combined armies march for the Chesapeak—Expedition of Arnold against New London—York-town invested—Surrender of Lord Cornwallis.

THE deep gloom which in the commencement of the year had enveloped the prospects of America, and which we have seen darkening for a time the south, was far from being dissipated in the north. The total incompetency of the political system adopted by the United States to their own preservation, became every day more and more apparent. At a time when the most vigorous exertions seemed indispensable to the safety of the nation, an irresolute feebleness and backwardness were every where manifested, as if each state was fearful of doing too much, and of taking upon itself a larger portion of the common burden than was borne by its neighbour.

The resolutions of Congress had called for an army

army of thirty-seven thousand men, to be in camp by the 1st of January. The requisition had been much too long delayed; and had it even been made in time, it is not probable that so large a force could have been brought into the field; but the deficiencies and the delays, on the part of the respective states, exceeded every calculation which could reasonably have been made.

The regular force drawn from Pennsylvania to Georgia inclusive, at no time, during this active and interesting campaign, amounted to three thousand effective men.

Of the northern troops, twelve hundred had been detached under the Marquis de la Fayette to the aid of Virginia. Including these in the estimate, the states from New Jersey to New Hampshire inclusive, so late as the month of April, had furnished only five thousand infantry. Of these the returns for that month exhibit, in the northern department, less than three thousand effectives. The cavalry and artillery at no time amounted to one thousand men. This small army was gradually and slowly agumented, so as in the month of May to exhibit a total of near seven thousand men, of whom rather more than four thousand might have been relied on for action. Even this small force was less efficient than it would otherwise have been, in consequence of being brought into camp too late to acquire that discipline which is essential to military service.

The

The prospects for the campaign were rendered still more unpromising, by the almost total failure of supplies for the support of the troops. The clothing which had been long expected from Europe had not yet arrived, and the disappointments in this respect had been as unaccountable as they were afflicting. But the most serious alarm was produced by the want of provisions.*

* On the 1st of May 1781, General Washington commenced a military journal. The following is a brief statement of the situation of the army at that time:—"I begin, at this epoch, a concise journal of military transactions, &c. I lament not having attempted it from the commencement of the war, in aid of my memory; and wish the multiplicity of matter, which continually surrounds me, and the embarrassed state of our affairs, which is momentarily calling the attention to perplexities of one kind or another, may not defeat altogether, or so interrupt my present intention and plan as to render it of little avail.

"To have the clearer understanding of the entries which may follow, it would be proper to recite in detail our wants and our prospects, but this alone would be a work of much time and great magnitude. It may suffice to give the sum of them, which I shall do in a few words, viz.

"Instead of having magazines filled with provisions, we have a scanty pittance scattered here and there in the different states. Instead of having our arsenals well supplied with military stores, they are poorly provided, and the workmen all leaving them. Instead of having the various articles of field equipage in readiness to deliver, the quarter-master general is but now applying to the several states (as the *dernier ressort)* to provide these things for their troops respectively. Instead of having a regular system of transportation established

After Congress had come to the resolution of emitting no more bills on the credit of the continent, the duty of supplying the army with provisions necessarily devolved on the states, who possessed the whole power of taxation, who continued to issue paper money, and who were required by the federal government to furnish certain specified articles for the subsistence of the troops, according to a ratio established by Congress. To such a degree had these requisitions been neglected, as to excite the apprehension that, at every station, the soldiers must be disbanded from the want of food.

lished upon credit, or funds in the quarter-master's hands to defray the contingent expences of it, we have neither the one nor the other; and all that business, or a great part of it, being done by military impressment, we are daily and hourly oppressing the people, souring their tempers, and alienating their affections. Instead of having the regiments completed to the new establishment (and which ought to have been so) by the of , agreeably to the requisitions of Congress, scarce any state in the union has, at this hour, an eighth-part of its quota in the field; and there is little prospect that I can see of ever getting more than half. In a word, instead of having every thing in readiness to take the field, we have nothing; and instead of having the prospect of a glorious offensive campaign before us, we have a bewildered and gloomy prospect of a defensive one; unless we should receive a powerful aid of ships, land troops, and money, from our generous allies; and these at present are too contingent to build upon."

To

To increase the general embarrassment, the quarter-master's department was altogether destitute of funds, and unable to transport provisions or other stores from place to place, but by means of impressment supported by a military force. This measure had been repeated, especially in the state of New York, till it excited so much disgust and irritation among the people, that the commander in chief was under serious apprehensions of actual resistance to his authority.

These perplexities had not been unforeseen by General Washington, nor had any possible exertion to obviate them been omitted. Every representation calculated to urge the states to an exact compliance with all the requisitions of Congress, by delineating to them the dangers to be apprehended from their inattention to the completion or to the wants of the army, had been again and again repeated. Congress had been pressed to exert their weight, and officers supposed to possess influence in the respective states had been deputed to enforce the remonstrances he made.

While in this state of deplorable imbecility, intelligence from every quarter announced the increasing danger with which America was threatened. Information was received that an expedition was preparing from Canada against fort Pitt, to be conducted by Sir John Johnstone and Colonel Connelly. The latter gentleman was to take with him

him commissions for many persons in the country to be invaded, who, it was understood, had already engaged several hundred men to join the British standard; and his influence, it was apprehended, would operate perniciously and extensively.

Formidable combinations among the Indians also had been entered into, and the whole extent of the western frontier was threatened with a renewal of savage warfare.

In addition to these alarming circumstances, some vessels had arrived at Crown Point from Canada; and the most explicit information was given to General Schuyler, who, though out of the regular service, still performed an important part in the military transactions of his country, and to General Clinton the commandant in that district, that three thousand men had assembled on the lakes, for the purpose of once more attempting an invasion from that quarter. This information proved to be incorrect; but it was received in such a manner as to gain belief, and was confidently conveyed to the commander in chief. It was at that critical moment the more alarming, because a correspondence of a criminal nature, between some persons in Albany and Canada, had just been discovered. A letter which Generals Schuyler and Clinton had the address and vigilance to intercept, which appeared to be only a continuation of communications formerly made, gave an account

account of the distresses of the Americans, the strength and disposition of their troops, the disaffection of particular settlements, the provision which those settlements had made for the subsistence of an invading army, their readiness to join such an army, the earnest wish of a great proportion of the people that the British would advance in force, and concluded with assurances of the happy consequences which must result to the king's arms from a rapid movement to Albany.

This intelligence from the northern frontier was rendered peculiarly serious by the ambiguous conduct observed by the inhabitants of that tract of country which now constitutes the state of Vermont. Under grants from the governor of New Hampshire, they had settled lands within the chartered limits of New York; and early in the war had declared themselves independent, and had framed a constitution which was carried into complete operation. The state of New York, however, still continued to assert her claim of sovereignty over them. The controversy on this delicate subject had become so violent, as to threaten a civil war; and the irritation incident to such contests had advanced to such a point, that indications were given of an opinion that the restoration of the British authority was an evil not of greater magnitude than the establishment of that of New York. It was openly declared that, if not admitted into

into the Union as an independent state, they held themselves at liberty to make a separate peace; and some negotiations were carrying on with the enemy, which imposed both on the British and on the American government the opinion, that a disposition in Vermont to abandon the common cause of America was by no means improbable.

Accustomed to contemplate at a distance, and to prepare for, all possible events which might grow out of the situation of the United States, the American chief was not depressed by this state of American affairs. In the habit of struggling with difficulties, they never appeared too great to be surmounted; and his courage at all times grew with the dangers which surrounded him. With a mind happily tempered by nature, and improved by experience, those fortunate events which had occasionally brightened the prospects of his country, and had induced many to believe the revolution accomplished, never relaxed his exertions or his precautions; nor could the most disastrous state of things drive him to despair. Persuaded that only active offensive operations could bring the war to a happy conclusion, he had, in the course of every campaign, urged all the arguments which might be of any avail, and exerted all the influence he possessed, to induce the adoption of measures which would enable him to pursue a system alike recommended by the circumstances of America, and

and by a temper not less enterprising than cautious. So far as depended on himself, such measures had uniformly been taken; but the means of carrying any great plan into execution had never yet been furnished, and while the hopes of each year were disappointed, the state of public affairs became more and more perplexed. Although entirely uncertain what operations he might be enabled to undertake during the approaching campaign, he had deemed it proper to adopt such preparatory steps as would put it in his power to turn to advantage any fortunate incident which might occur. To digest a system adapted to contingent events, conferences had been held with the Count de Rochambeau, in consequence of which orders were transmitted to that officer, directing him to be in readiness to march to the North river as large a portion of the French troops as could be spared from the protection of the fleet. Their place, when they should actually move, was to be supplied with militia. These orders were given in the beginning of April, not with the intention of putting the troops immediately in motion, but of having every thing in readiness when a movement should become proper; and, in the mean time, of preventing further detachments to the south, by impressing on Sir Henry Clinton some fears for New York.

Early in May, the Count de Barras, who had been

been appointed to the command of the French fleet stationed on the American coast, arrived in Boston, accompanied by the Viscount de Rochambeau, and brought the long-expected information from the cabinet of Versailles. An interview between General Washington and the commander of the French forces was immediately held at Withersfield, for the purpose of digesting their plan for future operations, as definitively as their present knowledge of circumstances would admit.

Before the arrival of Colonel Laurens in Europe, Doctor Franklin had received the instructions of Congress, and had commenced the negotiations to which they related. His applications did not meet with a very favourable reception. Monsieur de Vergennes complained "that the demands of Congress were excessive; and indicated an opinion that they wished to throw too much of the burthen of the war on their ally. He said that the exertions and the expence with which France supported the war in different parts of the world fully employed her means; and that her public credit had its limits, to surpass which would be fatal to it. But to give the United States a signal proof of his friendship, his majesty would grant them a donation of six millions of *livres tournois:* a part to be invested in arms and clothing for the army, according to a list to be furnished by Doctor Franklin; and the residue to be paid to the drafts of General

General Washington. It was impossible, he said, for his majesty to favour the negotiation in the kingdom of the loan which was required; because it would prejudice those which he had occasion himself to make for the support of the war."

No part of the communication was more interesting to the United States than that which respected the naval armament designed to act in the American seas. According to the arrangements made on this subject, twenty ships of the line, under the command of the Count de Grasse, were destined for the West Indies; twelve of which were to proceed to the continent of America, and might be expected to arrive in the month of July.

Some movement of the British fleet having been made which required the presence of the Count de Barras at Newport, he was unable to attend the conference at Withersfield; and the plan of operations was settled by the two generals. It was determined to unite the troops of France to those of America on the Hudson, and to commence the most vigorous operations against New York. The regular army at that station was estimated at only four thousand five hundred men; and though it was understood that Sir Henry Clinton would be able to reinforce it with five or six thousand militia, it was believed that the place could not be maintained without recalling a considerable part of the troops from the southward,

southward, and consequently enfeebling their operations in that quarter. Should this happen, it was resolved to strike a blow wherever success should be most probable.

The resolution for vigorous offensive operations against New York being taken, the generals separated, for the purpose of superintending the preparations for its execution.

The prospect of expelling the enemy from New York roused the northern states from that apathy into which they appeared to have been sinking, and vigorous measures were immediately taken to fill their regiments. Yet those measures were far from being entirely successful. When, in the month of June, the army moved out of winter-quarters, and encamped at Peck's Hill, six thousand five hundred and ten rank and file were wanted to complete the regiments under the immediate command of General Washington. The total of every description, including the garrison at West Point and those on duty in Virginia and elsewhere, amounted to seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-four men. Of these, four thousand five hundred and forty-one were fit for action, and might be brought into the field. In this estimate, however, was not comprehended a detachment from the line of New York, under the command of General Clinton, which had garrisoned the posts on the northern frontier of that state, and had not yet joined the grand army.

Such

Such was the American force with which the campaign of 1781 was opened. It fell so far short of that on which the calculations had been made when the plan of operations was concerted at Withersfield, as to excite serious doubts respecting the propriety of adhering to that plan. For this deficiency of men on the part of the states, some compensation was made by the arrival of a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men to the army of Rochambeau, under convoy of a fifty-gun frigate.

To supply even this army regularly with provisions, required exertions much greater than had ever been made since the system of requisition had been substituted for that of purchasing. The hope of terminating the war in a great measure produced these exertions. The legislatures of the New England states, from which country flesh, spirits, and salt, were to be drawn, took up the subject in earnest, and passed resolutions for the necessary supplies. In order to secure the co-operation of all, a convention of delegates from those states assembled at Providence, and agreed upon the quotas to be furnished by them respectively each month throughout the campaign. But till these resolutions could be executed, the embarrassments of the army continued; and, for some time after the troops had taken the field, there was reason to apprehend, either that the great objects of the cam-

paign must be relinquished for want of provisions, or that coercive means must still be used.

New England not furnishing flour, this important article was to be drawn from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The two first-mentioned states, having been for a long time the theatre of war, and the system of impressment having fallen heavily on them, were much exhausted; and the applications to Pennsylvania did not promise to be very successful. On the subject of a supply of flour, therefore, serious fears existed. These were in a considerable degree removed by the activity and exertions of an individual.

The management of the finances, a duty at all times intricate and difficult, but peculiarly so in the United States, at a period when, without energy in government, funds were to be created, and a ruined credit restored, had been lately committed to Mr. Robert Morris, a delegate of Congress from the state of Pennsylvania. This gentleman, who had been very active in establishing the bank in Philadelphia, united considerable political talents with a degree of mercantile enterprise, information, and credit, seldom equalled in any country. He had accepted this arduous appointment, on the condition of being allowed the year 1781 to make his arrangements; during which time the department should be conducted by those already employed, and with the resources which government could command.

command. But the critical state of public affairs, and the pressing wants of the army, obliged him to change his original resolution, and to enter immediately on the duties of his office. The occasion required that he should bring his private credit in aid of the public resources; and pledge himself personally and extensively for articles of the most absolute necessity, which could not be otherwise obtained. Condemning the system of violence and of legal fraud which had too long been practised, as being calculated to defeat its own object, he sought the gradual restoration of confidence, by the only means which could restore it—a punctual and faithful compliance with the engagements he should make. Herculean as was this task, in the existing derangement of the American finances, he entered upon it with courage; and if not completely successful, certainly did more than could have been supposed practicable with the means placed in his hands. To him, in no inconsiderable degree, it is to be attributed, that the very active and decisive operations of the campaign of 1781 were not impeded, perhaps entirely defeated, by a total failure of the means for transporting military stores, and for feeding the army.

On determining to undertake the management of the American finances, he laid before Congress the plan of a national bank, the capital of which was to consist of four hundred thousand dollars,

to be made up by individual subscription. It was to be incorporated by government, and to be subject to the inspection of the superintendant of the finances, who was at all times to have access to the books. Their notes were to be receivable as specie from the respective states, into the treasury of the Union. This beneficial and necessary institution received the full approbation of Congress; and the subscribers were, on the last day of the present year, incorporated by an ordinance made for that purpose.

This measure was of great importance to the future operations of the army; as it enabled the superintendant of the finances to use, by anticipation, the funds of the nation; a power of infinite value when prudently and judiciously exercised. But a contract entered into by him with the state of Pennsylvania was of more immediate utility.

It will be recollected that the army was principally to rely on that state for a supply of flour, and that there was reason to apprehend a continuance of the most distressing disappointments in this essential article. After having relieved the wants of the moment by his private credit, Mr. Morris proposed to take on himself the task of complying with all the specific requisitions made by Congress on Pennsylvania for the present year, on receiving, as a reimbursement, the taxes imposed by a law just enacted. This proposition being

being accepted, the contract was made; and, in consequence of it, supplies which the government found itself incapable of furnishing, were raised by an individual.

As the French troops approached the North river, intelligence was received that a large detachment from New York had made an incursion into Jersey, under appearances which indicated an intention not immediately to return. This being thought a favourable moment for gaining the posts on the north end of York Island, a plan was formed for seizing them by a *coup de main;* and the night of the 2d of July was fixed on for its execution. As the possession of these posts would greatly promote the ulterior views of the allies, General Washington had fixed a time for the enterprise, by which it was supposed that the Count de Rochambeau might join the American army at King's-bridge, and thus secure the ground which might be gained. An aide-de-camp was therefore dispatched to meet that officer, with letters explaining the enterprise contemplated, and requesting him to hasten his march, and to file off from Ridgebury to Bedford, so as to meet the commander in chief at the time and place appointed.

With the proposed attack on the works on the north end of York Island, was to be combined an attempt to cut off some light troops stationed on the outside of King's-bridge, at Morrissania, under the

the command of Colonel Delancy. This part of the plan was to be executed by the Duke de Lauzun; to whose legion were to be added Sheldon's dragoons, and a small body of continental troops dispersed on the lines, under the command of General Waterbury.

As the most exact co-operation of the two armies could not ensure success, unless the enemy should be completely surprised, it became necessary, in addition to the usual precautions, to assign some cause for the movement about to be made. The orders, therefore, which were issued on the 30th of June, announced the expectation of forming a junction with the French army in two days; and the desire of the commander in chief that the American line should be, on that occasion, as full, and as respectable, as their numbers would permit. The after-orders gave notice "that the French army would not come to that ground; and, as the general was desirous of shewing all the respect in his power to those generous allies, who were hastening, with the zeal of friends, and the ardour of soldiers, to share the fatigues and dangers of the campaign, he proposed to receive them at some other more convenient place, and for this purpose would march the whole line of the American army at three in the morning."

General Lincoln, who commanded the detachment destined to attack the works, embarked on the

the night of the first of July, at Teller's Point, in boats with muffled oars; and fell down the river undiscovered, to Dobbs' ferry, where he concealed his men and his boats. Upon reconnoitring in person the post to be attacked, he perceived that the detachment had returned from Jersey, and that the British were encamped on that part of the island in much greater force than had been expected. In addition to this circumstance, a ship of war had taken a station which rendered it difficult, if not impossible, for the American boats to make the landing-place without being perceived. On observing these unexpected obstacles, General Lincoln relinquished the design of attacking the works, and prepared to execute the eventual orders which had been given him.

These were, to favour the execution of the enterprise entrusted to the Duke de Lauzun, if the more important part of the plan should appear to be impracticable; and, for this purpose, he was directed, after landing at Spiken Devil Creek, to march to the high grounds in front of King's-bridge, and there to conceal his detachment till the attack on Delancy's corps should commence. He was then to take such a position as would enable him to oppose any reinforcement from the island, which might attempt to pass the bridge, and turn the flank of Lauzun. He was also to place himself in such a manner as to intercept the corps of

of refugees, if it should attempt a retreat into the island.

The legion of Lauzun was unable to reach the point of action by the hour agreed on for the attack. Meanwhile, the return of day betrayed Lincoln; and a sharp skirmish ensued between him and a corps of light troops sent out to engage him, who retired into the island on the approach of the army under General Washington.

As the commander in chief had calculated on the exertions of the whole British force to wrest from him those strong posts on the island which he flattered himself with being able to seize by surprise, and had determined to risk a general action to maintain the possession of them, every arrangement had been made to bring to his aid not only the troops of France, but all the American strength which could there suddenly be collected. The Jersey line, therefore, received orders to reach the North river, opposite to King's-bridge; and the governor of New York had been requested to take secret measures to draw out the militia, on certain signals being given, which were preconcerted between them. The arrangements for making these signals, in the event of success, being taken with the officer who commanded at West Point, the continental army commenced its march from Peek's Kill, at three in the morning of the 2d of July, and reached Valentine's-hill the next day

day about sun-rise. As soon as the engagement with General Lincoln commenced, the army was again put in motion; and on its approach, the British detachment retreated into the island.

Both parts of the plan having thus failed, and the French army not having yet come up, the troops were permitted to remain on their arms till the afternoon, and the day was employed in reconnoitring the posts of the enemy. In the evening, the army retired to Valentine's-hill, and the next day to Dobbs' ferry, at which place the Count de Rochambeau arrived on the 6th of July. The thanks of the commander in chief were given in general orders to that officer, for the unremitting zeal with which he had proceeded to form the so long wished-for junction with the American army; and he was requested to convey to the officers and soldiers under his command, the grateful sense which was entertained by the general of the cheerfulness with which they had performed so long and laborious a march, at so hot a season. He sought, not only by his own attentions, but by encouraging the same dispositions in the American officers, to obviate all those jealousies and misunderstandings which frequently exist among troops of different nations, serving in the same army.

Every nerve was now strained to be in complete readiness for the grand enterprise projected against New York. But as the execution of any plan

plan which could be formed depended on events which had not yet taken place, and were necessarily uncertain, the commander in chief had directed his attention to other objects to be pursued, if that which was most desirable should prove unattainable.

Should circumstances take a course so unpropitious to his hopes as to render the siege of New York unadvisable, his views were turned to Virginia; and, after the destruction of the enemy in that state, to the Carolinas, and to Georgia. Should a naval superiority be acquired, some valuable results might certainly be obtained from it; unless Sir Henry Clinton should previously reassemble all his forces in New York, or Lord Cornwallis should retire through North Carolina to Charlestown. To prevent a measure so much to be dreaded as the former, General Washington was desirous that the Count de Barras, whose fleet was understood to have been rendered superior to that of the English by the departure of the Royal Oak for Halifax, should immediately take possession of the Chesapeak. The French admiral, however, was unwilling to engage in an expedition which he deemed so full of hazard; and the general forbore to press it.

Early in August, the apprehensions of the commander in chief that he should be unable to accomplish his favourite object, began to influence his conduct.

conduct. His army received no considerable addition to its strength, and no certain assurances were given him that his requisitions for men would be complied with. Letters from the Marquis de la Fayette announced that a large portion of the British and German troops in Virginia were embarked, and that their destination was believed to be New York. These circumstances induced him to turn his attention more seriously than heretofore to the southward, and to prepare for giving his efforts that direction. As it was of the utmost importance to conceal from Sir Henry Clinton this eventual change of plan, his arrangements were made secretly; and, in the mean time, there was no relaxation of the preparations for acting against New York. A reinforcement from Europe of near three thousand men being received by Sir Henry Clinton, he was induced thereby to countermand his orders requiring Lord Cornwallis to detach to his aid a part of the army in Virginia; and to direct that nobleman to take some strong position on the Chesapeak, from which he might conveniently execute the plans meditated against the states lying on that bay, as soon as the storm which now threatened the British power should blow over.

In a few days after the arrival of this reinforcement from Europe, the Count de Barras communicated to General Washington the interesting information

information that De Grasse was to have sailed from Cape François for the Chesapeak on the 3d of August, with a squadron of from twenty-five to twenty-nine sail of the line, having on board three thousand two hundred soldiers; and that he had made engagements with the officers commanding the land and naval forces of Spain in the West Indies, to return to those seas by the middle of October.

It was now necessary to determine absolutely on the object against which the arms of the combined forces should be directed.

The shortness of the time appropriated by De Grasse for his continuance on the American coast, the apparent disinclination of the naval officers to attempt to force a passage into the harbour of New York, and the backwardness of the states in complying with the requisitions which had been made on them for men, decided in favour of southern operations; and the views of the commander in chief were entirely directed towards the waters of the Chesapeak. This change of plan, which had before been suggested to La Fayette as probable, was now communicated to that nobleman as certain; and he was requested to make such a disposition of his army as should be best calculated to prevent Lord Cornwallis from saving himself by a sudden march to Charlestown.

In pursuance of the engagements entered into

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by the minister of his Most Christian Majesty, the Count de Grasse had sailed from Brest early in March with a squadron of twenty-five sail of the line, five of which were designed for the East and twenty for the West Indies. Admiral Rodney, who commanded the naval forces of Great Britain in the West Indies, seems to have been absorbed in securing the immense plunder acquired by the capture of St. Eustatius from the Dutch; and De Grasse, after an indecisive engagement in the channel of St. Lucia with Sir Samuel Hood, who had been detached to intercept him, formed a junction with the ships of his sovereign already on that station, and was rendered thereby greatly superior to Rodney. After some operations, in the course of which Tobago was taken by the French, De Grasse sailed with a large convoy from Cape François, which he conducted out of danger; and then directed his course with twenty-eight sail of the line and several frigates to the Chesapeak, where he arrived late in August. At Cape Henry he found an officer dispatched from La Fayette with full intelligence of the situation of the armies in Virginia. Lord Cornwallis, who had received notice that a French fleet was to be expected on the coast, had collected his whole force at York Town and Gloster Point, where he was fortifying himself assiduously; and the Marquis had taken a position on James river, for the purpose of opposing

posing any attempt which the British army might make to escape into South Carolina. In consequence of this information, four ships of the line and several frigates were detached for the purposes of blocking up the mouth of York river, and of convoying the land forces brought from the West Indies under the command of the Marquis of St. Simon, up the James, to form a junction with La Fayette. In the mean time, the fleet lay at anchor just within the Capes.

On the 25th of August, the Count de Barras sailed from Newport for the Chesapeak.

Rodney was apprised of the destination of De Grasse, but seems not to have suspected that he would sail with his whole fleet for the American continent. The convoy which had departed from Cape François was so valuable, that the English admiral appears to have been persuaded that a large part of the French fleet would continue to protect it till it should be safe in port. Supposing, therefore, that a part of his squadron would be sufficient to maintain an equality of naval force in the American seas, he detached Sir Samuel Hood to the continent, with only fourteen sail of the line. That officer made land to the southward of the Capes of Virginia, a few days before De Grasse entered the Chesapeak; and, not seeing any ships belonging to either nation, proceeded without delay to the Capes of the Delaware, and thence to

Sandy

Sandy Hook, which he reached on the 28th of August.

Admiral Greaves, who had succeeded Arbuthnot in the command of the fleet on the American station, lay with seven sail of the line in the harbour of New York, when Hood appeared off the Hook. Two of his ships had been considerably damaged in a cruise near Boston, and were then under repair, so that he had only five which were fit for service. On the same day that Hood appeared, and gave information which rendered it probable that De Grasse, if not at that time on the coast, might be expected daily, intelligence was also received that De Barras had sailed from Newport. Without waiting for the ships under repair, those fit for sea were ordered out of the harbour; and Greaves, who, as the senior officer, took command of the whole fleet, consisting of nineteen sail of the line, sailed immediately in quest of the French. Not suspecting the actual strength of De Grasse, he hoped to fall in with the one or the other of their squadrons, and to fight it separately.

Early in the morning of the 5th of September, the French fleet, consisting of twenty-four ships of the line, was discovered lying at anchor just within the Chesapeak, extending across its entrance from Cape Henry to the middle ground. No previous information of the approach of Greaves had been received, nor had the British admiral obtained any accounts,

accounts, either of the strength or arrival of his adversary. Orders were immediately given by De Grasse for the ships to slip their cables, and, leaving their anchorage ground, severally to form the line as they could come up, without regard to their particular or specified stations. The French fleet stretched out to sea, and Greaves formed the line of battle ahead. As the two fleets came nearly parallel to each other, the British admiral made the signal for the whole fleet to wear, by which manœuvre it was put on the same tack with his adversary, so that his rear became his van. About four in the afternoon the action commenced between the headmost ships, and continued till sunset. Several ships were much damaged, but neither admiral could claim the victory. For five successive days the hostile fleets continued in view of each other, repairing the damages which had been sustained, and endeavouring, by a course of manœuvres, to gain some advantage which might lead to decisive consequences. As the French generally maintained the windward, it was in the power of De Grasse to have brought on a close action; but the capture of the British army in Virginia was an object of too much importance to be put in hazard by an engagement which might have lost the command of the Chesapeak, and he therefore determined to regain his former station within the Capes. On returning to his anchorage ground,

ground, he found the count de Barras with the squadron from Newport; and fourteen transports laden with heavy artillery, and military stores proper for carrying on a siege. That admiral, when he sailed from Rhode Island, had taken a very wide circuit for the purpose of avoiding the enemy, and had fortunately entered the bay during the absence of De Grasse.

On approaching the Capes, the British admiral found the entrance of the Chesapeak defended by a force with which he was entirely unable to contend; and therefore bore away for New York in order to repair his ships, and form a junction with such reinforcements as might be expected soon to arrive on the American station.

Having determined to direct the immediate active operations of the allied arms against Lord Cornwallis, General Washington prepared to execute the plan which he had formed. The defence of the posts on the Hudson was committed to General Heath, who was also directed to protect the adjacent country, so far as was compatible with the still more important object of his attention; and for these purposes the two regiments of infantry from New Hampshire, ten from Massachussetts, five from Connecticut, Sheldon's legion, the third regiment of artillery, together with the corps of invalids, and the state troops, with the militia called into actual service, were placed under

his command. General Washington resolved to lead the southern expedition in person. All the troops of Rochambeau, and a strong detachment from the continental army, consisting of the light infantry under Scammel, four light companies from New York and Connecticut, the regiment of Rhode Island, Hazen's regiment, two regiments of New York, the residue of the Jersey line, and Lamb's artillery, amounting in the whole to upwards of two thousand men, were destined for this service. On the 19th of August, Hazen's regiment, and the line of Jersey, were directed to pass the Hudson at Dobbs' ferry, and take a position between Springfield and Chatham, where they were to cover some bakehouses to be instantly constructed in the vicinity of those places, for the purpose of more certainly veiling the real designs of the American chief, and of exciting fears for Staten Island. On the same day the whole army was put in motion,* and on the 20th and 21st the American troops crossed the Hudson at King's ferry. The circuit made by the French was rather more extensive, and they did not complete the passage of the river till the 25th of the month.

As it was desirable to conceal as long as possible

* In addition to the immense exertions of the financier to effect this movement, General Washington obtained a loan of specie from the Count de Rochambeau.

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the real object of the present movement, the march of the army was continued till the 31st of August, in such a direction as to keep up the fears which had been excited for New York; and a considerable degree of address was used by the preparations made in the American camp, and by the declarations of the general and other officers, to countenance the opinion that the real design of Washington was, either to make himself master of Staten Island, or to take a position about Sandy Hook, which would favour any attempt that might be made by the French fleet to force a passage over the bar into the harbour of New York. The intelligence contained in the letters which had been intercepted by Sir Henry Clinton favoured this deception; and even after it became necessary for the combined army to leave the route leading down the Hudson, and to march directly for the Delaware, the British general is stated to have retained the strong impression which he had received respecting the danger of New York, and not to have suspected the real object of his adversary till he had actually passed the last-mentioned river, and was at too great a distance for his march to be molested.

It being too late to obstruct the progress of the allied army towards Virginia, Sir Henry Clinton, probably with the hope of recalling General Washington, immediately resolved to act offensively

in the north. An expedition was planned against New London in Connecticut, the command of which was entrusted to General Arnold. A strong detachment was embarked on board a fleet of transports which passed through the Sound, and landed early on the morning of the 6th of September, on both sides of the harbour, about three miles from the town.

New London is a sea-port on the west side of New Thames, in which were collected naval and other stores to a considerable amount. For its defence, a fort called Fort Trumbull, and a redoubt, had been constructed somewhat below it, on the same side of the river; and opposite to it, on Groton-hill, was Fort Griswold, a strong square fortification, but not sufficiently garrisoned.

General Arnold, who commanded in person the troops which landed on the western side of the harbour, immediately advanced against Fort Trumbull, the redoubt, and New London. These posts, being totally untenable, were evacuated on his approach, and he took possession of them with inconsiderable loss.

To prevent the escape of the shipping up the river, Lieutenant-colonel Eyre, who commanded the division which landed on the Groton side of the harbour, consisting of two British regiments, a battalion of New Jersey volunteers, and a detachment of yagers and artillery, had been ordered to storm

storm Fort Griswold, which had been represented to Arnold as too incomplete to make any serious resistance. This fort was defended by Colonel Ledyard, with a garrison of about one hundred and sixty men, part of whom had just evacuated the works on the New London side of the river. Being of some strength, and the approach to it difficult, the garrison resolved to defend it, and rejected the summons to surrender. The British marched up to the assault on three sides; and overcoming, with persevering valour, the difficulties which a steep ascent and a continued fire opposed to them, at length made a lodgment on the ditch and frazed work, and entered the embrasures with charged bayonets. A further defence being hopeless, the action ceased on the part of the Americans, and Colonel Ledyard delivered his sword to the commanding officer of the assailants. Irritated by the obstinate resistance which had been experienced, and the loss which had been sustained, the British officer on whom the command had devolved, tarnished the glory which victory gave him, by the inhuman use he made of it. Instead of respecting, with the generous spirit of a soldier, the gallantry which he had encountered and subdued, he indulged the vindictive feelings which had been aroused by the slaughter of his troops, and revenged them on men who no longer resisted. In the account given of this affair

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to General Washington by Governor Trumbull, he says that "the sword presented by Colonel Ledyard was immediately plunged into his bosom, and the carnage was kept up till the greater part of the garrison was killed or wounded." In this fierce assault, Colonel Eyre was killed, and Major Montgomery, the second in command, also fell as he entered the American works. The total loss of the assailants, in killed and wounded, was not much less than two hundred men.

The town of New London, and the stores contained in it, were consumed by fire. To escape the odium which invariably attends the useless and wanton destruction of private property, this fire was attributed to accident; but all the American accounts unite in declaring it to have been intentional. It is a fact which seems to manifest the respect entertained by this detachment for the militia of Connecticut, that their retreat was so early, as to leave the barracks at Fort Griswold standing, and a magazine of powder at that place untouched.

The march of General Washington was not arrested by this incursion into Connecticut. He pressed forward with the utmost possible celerity, and on the 5th of September, at Chester, received the important intelligence of the arrival of Admiral Count de Grasse in the Chesapeak. Having made the necessary arrangements for the transportation of his army, and directed those for whom trans-

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ports could not be furnished at the Elk, to march on to Baltimore, he proceeded in person to Virginia, attended by the Count de Rochambeau and the Chevalier de Chatelleux, and, on the 14th of September, reached Williamsburg.

As it was of the utmost importance to arrange a plan of co-operation with the French admiral, who had just returned from his engagement with Greaves to his former ground, and within the capes, the commander in chief, accompanied by Rochambeau, Chatelleux, Knox, and Du Portail, repaired to the fleet, and went on board the Ville de Paris, where every thing was adjusted in conformity with his wishes, except that De Grasse, who declared his utter inability to remain on the American coast longer than the 1st of November, declined, as too hazardous, a proposition which was made to him, to station some of his ships in the river above York-town, for the purpose of aiding the approaches in that quarter.

While the close investment of the British army was only delayed till the arrival of the troops from the north should render the contemplated operations perfectly secure, serious apprehensions were excited, that the brilliant results confidently anticipated from the decided superiority of the land and naval forces of the allies, would be put in the most imminent hazard.

Information was received that a reinforcement of

of six ships of the line, under Admiral Digby, had reached New York. Deeming it certain that the British fleet would be induced, by this addition to its strength, to attempt every thing for the relief of Lord Cornwallis, De Grasse expected to be attacked by a force not much inferior to his own. Thinking his present station unfavourable for a naval combat, he designed to change it; and communicated to General Washington his intention to leave a few frigates, to block up the mouths of James and York rivers, and to put to sea with his fleet in quest of the enemy. If they should not have left the harbour of New York, he purposed to block them up in that place; and supposed that his operations in that quarter would be of more service to the common cause, than his remaining in the bay, an idle spectator of the siege of York. The commander in chief was very much alarmed at this communication. It was obvious, and indeed the fact had been stated by the admiral, that, should he put to sea, the winds, and a variety of accidents, might prevent his return to the Chesapeak. During his absence, a temporary naval superiority might be acquired by the enemy in those parts; and the army of Lord Cornwallis might, with the loss of his artillery and a few men, be placed in perfect security. This was exposing to the caprice of fortune an event of infinite importance, which was now reduced to almost certain

certain calculation; and which could be endangered only by relinquishing the station at present occupied by the fleet. The admiral was therefore entreated to preserve that station, or, if it should be essential to take the open sea, to cruise within view of the capes, so as to be able to re-enter them at pleasure, and, in the mean time, to intercept any enemy endeavouring to make the bay. Fortunately, the wishes of the general prevailed; and the admiral, having resolved to erect a battery on Point Comfort, for the purpose of commanding the entrance into the Chesapeak, consented to relinquish those plans of active enterprise which his thirst of military glory had originally suggested, and to maintain a station deemed by the American general so conducive to the interest of the allies.

At length, on the 25th of September, the last division of the troops arrived in James river at the landing near Williamsburg, where they were disembarked; and the preparations for advancing against the enemy were soon completed.

York is a small village on the south side of the river which bears that name, where the long peninsula between the York and the James is only eight miles wide. In this broad and bold river a ship of the line may ride in safety. Its southern banks are high; and some batteries facing the water had been constructed on them by a small corps of artillery belonging to the state of Virginia, formerly stationed

stationed at this place. On the opposite shore is Gloucester Point; a piece of land projecting deep into the river, and narrowing it at that place, so that it does not exceed one mile. Both these posts were occupied by Lord Cornwallis, who had been assiduous in fortifying them. The communication between them was commanded by his batteries, and by some ships of war which lay under his guns.

The main body of his army was encamped in the open grounds about York-town, within a range of outer redoubts and field-works, calculated to command the peninsula, and impede the approach of the assailants: and Colonel Tarleton, with a small detachment, consisting of six or seven hundred men, held the post at Gloucester Point.

The legion of Lauzun, and a brigade of militia under General Weedon, the whole commanded by the French general De Choise, were directed to watch and restrain the enemy on the side of Gloucester; and on the 28th, the grand combined army moved down on the south side of the river, by different routes, towards York-town. About noon the heads of the columns reached the ground respectively assigned to them; and, after driving in the piquets and some cavalry, encamped for the evening. The next day was principally employed in reconnoitring the situation and works of the garrison, and in digesting the plans of approach: after which

which the right wing, consisting of Americans, extended further to the right, and occupied the ground east of Beaver Dam creek: while the left wing, consisting of the French, were stationed on the west side of that creek. In the course of the night Lord Cornwallis withdrew within his inner* lines; and the next day the works he had evacuated were possessed by the besieging army, which now completely and closely invested the town on that side.

No attack on Gloucester Point being intended, the arrangements in that quarter were only calculated to keep up a rigorous blockade; and the force allotted to this service consisted of rather more than two thousand men. On approaching the lines a sharp skirmish took place, which terminated unfavourably for the British; after which they remained under cover of their works, and the blockade sustained no further interruption.

Until the 6th of October, the besieging army was incessantly employed in disembarking their

* This movement is attributed to a letter from Sir Henry Clinton, dated on the 24th, and received on the evening of the 29th; in which the British commander in chief informed his lordship, that upwards of five thousand troops would be immediately embarked on board the King's ships, and that the utmost exertions would be made to relieve him: that Admiral Digby had arrived with three ships of the line, and that the fleet might be expected to sail about the 5th of October.

heavy

heavy artillery and military stores, and drawing them from the landing-place on James river to camp, a distance of six miles. This work being at length accomplished, the first parallel was commenced in the night of the 6th of October, within six hundred yards of the British lines, with so much silence, that the operation appears to have been unperceived, till the return of daylight disclosed it to the garrison. By that time the trenches were in such forwardness as to cover the men. The loss on this occasion was consequently inconsiderable. In killed and wounded, it amounted only to one officer and twenty men, and was principally sustained by the corps of the Marquis de St. Simon on the left. By the evening of the 9th several batteries and redoubts were completed, and cannon mounted in them. A heavy fire was immediately commenced on the besieged, the effect of which was soon perceived. Many of their guns were dismounted and silenced, and their works were in different places demolished. The next day new batteries were opened; and the fire became so heavy that the besieged withdrew their cannon from their embrasures, and scarcely returned a shot. The shells and red-hot balls from the American batteries reached the ships in the harbour; and in the evening set fire to the Charon, of forty-four guns, and three large transports, which were entirely consumed. Reciprocal esteem,

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and a spirit of emulation between the French and Americans, being cultivated with great care by the commander in chief, the siege was carried on with unexampled rapidity. On the night of the 11th, the second parallel was opened within three hundred yards of the British lines. This advance was made so secretly, and so much sooner than had been expected, that no suspicion of the measure seems to have been entertained by the besieged till daylight discovered the working parties to their piquets, by which time the trenches had advanced so far, as in a great measure to cover the men employed in them. The three succeeding days were devoted to the completion of the second parallel, and of the batteries constructed in it; during which, the fire of the garrison, who, with indefatigable labour, had opened several new embrasures, became more destructive than at any previous time. The men in the trenches were particularly annoyed by two redoubts, advanced three hundred yards in front of the British works, which flanked the second parallel of the besiegers. It was necessary to possess these redoubts; and on the 14th preparations were made to carry them both by storm. To avail himself of the spirit of emulation existing between the troops of the two nations, and to avoid furnishing matter to excite the jealousy of either, the attack of the one was committed to the Americans, and of the other to the French. The Marquis

quis de la Fayette commanded the American detachment, composed of the light infantry, which was intended to act against the redoubt on the left of the British works on the river bank; and the Baron de Viominel led the grenadiers and chasseurs of his country against that which, being further to the British right, approached rather nearer the French lines. Towards the close of day, the two detachments marched with equal firmness to the assault. Emulous for glory both for themselves and their country, every exertion was made by each. Colonel Hamilton, who, throughout this campaign, had commanded a battalion of light infantry, led the advanced corps of the Americans, consisting of his own and of Colonel Gimat's battalions; and Colonel Laurens, another aid of the commander in chief, turned the redoubt at the head of eighty men, in order to take the garrison in reverse, and intercept their retreat. The troops rushed on to the charge without firing a single piece; and so great was their ardour, that they did not give the sappers time to remove the abattis and palisades. Passing over them, they assaulted the works with irresistible impetuosity on all sides at once, and entered them with such rapidity that their loss was inconsiderable.* This redoubt was

* One serjeant and eight privates were killed; one lieutenant-colonel, four captains, one subaltern, one serjeant, and twenty-five rank and file, wounded.

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defended by Major Campbell, with some inferior officers, and forty-five privates. The major, a captain, an ensign, and seventeen privates, were made prisoners; eight privates were killed while the Americans were entering the works, and a few escaped. The redoubt attacked by the French was defended by a greater number of men; and the resistance being greater, was not overcome so quickly, or with so little loss. Of one hundred and twenty men commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, who were originally in this work, eighteen were killed, and forty-two, among whom were a captain and two subaltern officers, were made prisoners. In killed and wounded the assailants lost

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The irritation produced by the recent carnage in Fort Griswold had not so far subdued the humanity of the American character, as to induce retaliation. Not a man was killed except in action. "Incapable," said Colonel Hamilton in his report, "of imitating examples of barbarity, and forgetting recent provocation, the soldiery spared every man that ceased to resist." Mr. Gordon, in his History of the American war, states the orders given by La Fayette, with the approbation of Washington, to have directed that every man in the redoubt, after its surrender, should be put to the sword. These sanguinary orders, so repugnant to the character of the commander in chief, and of La Fayette, were never given. There is no trace of them among the papers of General Washington; and Colonel Hamilton, who took a part in the enterprise which assures his perfect knowledge of every material occurrence, has publicly contradicted the statement.

near

near one hundred men. The commander in chief was highly gratified with the active courage displayed in the assault. Speaking of it in his diary, he says, "The bravery exhibited by the attacking troops was emulous and praiseworthy. Few cases have exhibited greater proofs of intrepidity, coolness, and firmness, than were shewn on this occasion." The orders of the succeeding day, congratulating the army on the capture of these important works, expressed a high sense of the judicious dispositions and gallant conduct of both the Baron de Viominel and the Marquis de la Fayette; and requested them to convey to every officer and man engaged in the enterprise, the acknowledgments of the commander in chief, for the spirit and rapidity with which they advanced to the attack, and for the admirable firmness with which they supported themselves under the fire of the enemy without returning a shot. "The general reflects," the orders conclude, "with the highest degree of pleasure on the confidence which the troops of the two nations must hereafter have in each other. Assured of mutual support, he is convinced there is no danger which they will not cheerfully encounter, no difficulty which they will not bravely overcome."

In the same night on which these two redoubts were taken, they were included in the second parallel; and in the course of the next day, some howitzers

howitzers were placed in them, which, by five o'clock in the afternoon, were opened on the besieged.

The situation of Lord Cornwallis was now becoming desperate. His works in every quarter were sinking under the fire of the besiegers. The batteries already playing on him had silenced nearly all his guns; and the second parallel was about to open, which in a few hours must infallibly render the town altogether untenable. To suspend for a short time a catastrophe which appeared almost inevitable, he resolved on attempting to retard the completion of the second parallel, by a vigorous sortie against two batteries which appeared to be in the greatest readiness, and which were guarded by French troops. The party making this sortie consisted of three hundred and fifty men, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Abercrombie. It was formed into two detachments; which, about four in the morning of the sixteenth, attacked the two batteries with great impetuosity, and carried both with inconsiderable loss; but the guards from the trenches immediately advancing on them, they retreated without being able to effect any thing important, and the few pieces which they had hastily spiked were soon rendered fit for service.

About four in the afternoon, the besiegers opened several batteries in their second parallel; and it

was apparent that, in the course of the ensuing day, the whole line of batteries in that parallel, in which was mounting an immense quantity of artillery, would be ready to play on the town. The works of the besieged were in no condition to sustain so tremendous a fire. They were every where in ruins. Their batteries were so overpowered, that in the whole front which was attacked they could not shew a single gun; and their shells were nearly expended. In this extremity, Lord Cornwallis formed the bold design of endeavouring to escape by land with the greater part of his army.

He determined to leave his sick and baggage behind, and crossing over in the night with his effectives to Gloucester shore, to attack de Choise. After cutting to pieces or dispersing the troops under that officer, he intended to mount his infantry on the horses belonging to that detachment, and on others to be seized on the road, and by a rapid march to gain the fords of the great rivers; and, forcing his way through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Jersey, to form a junction with the army in New York.

Scarcely a possibility existed that this desperate attempt could be crowned with success; but the actual situation of the British general had become so absolutely hopeless, that it could scarcely be changed for the worse.

Boats prepared under other pretexts were held

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in readiness to receive the troops at ten at night, in order to convey them over the river. The arrangements were made with the utmost secrecy; and the first embarkation had arrived at the Point unperceived, and part of the troops were landed, when a sudden and violent storm of wind and rain interrupted the further execution of this hazardous plan, and drove the boats down the river. It was not till the appearance of day-light that the storm ceased, so that the boats could return. They were sent to bring back the soldiers; who, without much loss, were relanded on the southern shore in the course of the forenoon.

In the morning of the 17th, several new batteries were opened in the second parallel, which poured in a weight of fire no longer to be resisted. Neither the works, nor any of the town, afforded security to the garrison; and in the opinion of Lord Cornwallis, as well as of his engineers, the place was no longer tenable. About ten in the forenoon his Lordship beat a parley, and proposed a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours, that commissioners might meet at Moore's house, which was just in the rear of the first parallel, to settle terms for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloucester. To this letter the American general immediately returned an answer, declaring his "ardent desire to spare the further effusion of blood, and his readiness to listen to

such terms as were admissible;" but as, in the present crisis, he could not consent to lose a moment in fruitless negotiations, he desired that, "previous to the meeting of the commissioners, the proposals of his Lordship might be transmitted in writing, for which purpose a suspension of hostilities for two hours should be granted." The general propositions * stated by Lord Cornwallis,

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York, in Virginia, 17th October, 1781, Half past four, P. M.

* SIR,

I have this moment been honoured with your excellency's letter, dated this day. The time limited for sending my answer will not admit of entering into the detail of articles: but the basis of my proposals will be, that the garrisons of York and Gloster shall be prisoners of war with the customary honours; and, for the convenience of the individuals whom I have the honour to command, that the British shall be sent to Britain, and the Germans to Germany, under engagements not to serve against France, America, or their allies, until released, or regularly exchanged. That all arms and public stores shall be delivered up to you; but that the usual indulgence of side-arms to officers, and of retaining private property shall be granted to officers and soldiers; and that the interests of several individuals in civil capacities, and connected with us, shall be attended to. If your excellency thinks that a continuance of the suspension of hostilities will be necessary to transmit your answer, I shall have no objection to the hour that you propose. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

CORNWALLIS.

His Excellency General Washington, &c. &c. &c.

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as forming the basis of the negotiation to be entered into, though not all of them admissible, being such as led to the opinion that no great difficulty would occur in adjusting the terms of the capitulation, the suspension of hostilities was prolonged for the night. In the mean time, to avoid the delay of useless discussion, the commander in chief drew up and proposed * such ar-

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Head Quarters before York, 18th October, 1781.

* MY LORD,

To avoid unnecessary discussions and delays, I shall at once, in answer to your Lordship's letter of yesterday, declare the general basis upon which a definitive treaty of capitulation must take place. The garrisons of York and Gloucester, including the seamen, as you propose, will be received prisoners of war. The condition annexed of sending the British and German troops to the parts of Europe to which they respectively belong, is inadmissible. Instead of this, they will be marched to such parts of the country as can most conveniently provide for their subsistence; and the benevolent treatment of prisoners, which is invariably observed by the Americans, will be extended to them. The same honours will be granted to the surrendering army as were granted to the garrison at Charlestown.

The shipping and boats in the two harbours, with all their guns, stores, tackling, furniture, and apparel, shall be delivered in their present state to an officer of the army appointed to take possession of them.

The artillery, arms, accoutrements, military chest, and public stores of every denomination, shall be delivered, unimpaired, to the heads of departments to which they respectively belong.

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ticles as he would be willing to grant. These were transmitted to Lord Cornwallis; who was at the same time informed, that if he approved them, commissioners might immediately be appointed to digest them into form. In consequence of this message, the Viscount de Noailles and Lieutenant-colonel Laurens were met on the 18th by Colonel

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The officers will be indulged in retaining their side-arms, and the officers and soldiers may preserve their baggage and effects—with this reserve, that property taken in the country will be reclaimed.

With regard to the individuals in civil capacities, whose interests your lordship wishes may be attended to, until they are more particularly described nothing definitive can be settled.

I have to add that I expect the sick and wounded will be supplied with their own hospital stores, and be attended by British surgeons, particularly charged with the care of them.

Your lordship will be pleased to signify your determination either to accept or reject the proposals now offered, in the course of two hours from the delivery of this letter; that commissioners may be appointed to digest the articles of capitulation, or a renewal of hostilities may take place.

I have the honour to be, my Lord, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Lieutenant-general Earl Cornwallis.

York, in Virginia, 18th October, 1781.

SIR,

I agree to open a treaty of capitulation upon the basis of the garrisons of York and Gloster, including seamen, being prisoners of war, without annexing the condition of their being sent to Europe; but I expect to receive a compensation in arranging

Dundas and Major Ross; but, being unable to adjust definitively the terms of the capitulation, only a rough draught of them could be prepared, which was to be submitted to the consideration of the British general. Determined not to expose himself to those accidents which time might produce, General Washington could not permit any sus-

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arranging the articles of capitulation, for the surrender of Gloster in its present state of defence.

I shall, in particular, desire that the Bonetta sloop of war may be left entirely at my disposal from the hour that the capitulation is signed, to receive an aide-de-camp to carry my dispatches to Sir Henry Clinton, and such soldiers as I may think proper to send as passengers in her, to be manned with fifty men of her own crew, and to be permitted to sail without examination when my dispatches are ready: engaging on my part that the ship shall be brought back and delivered to you, if she escapes the dangers of the sea; that the crew and soldiers sent as passengers shall be accounted for in future exchanges as prisoners; that she shall carry off no officer without your consent, nor public property of any kind; and I shall likewise desire that the traders and inhabitants may preserve their property, and that no person may be punished or molested for having joined the British troops.

If you choose to proceed to negotiation on these grounds, I shall appoint two field-officers of my army to meet two officers from you at any time and place you think proper, to digest the articles of capitulation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

CORNWALLIS.

His Excellency General Washington, &c &c. &c.

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pense on the part of Lord Cornwallis. He therefore immediately directed the rough articles which had been prepared by the commissioners to be fairly transcribed, and sent them to his lordship early the next morning, with a letter expressing his expectation that they would be signed by eleven, and that the garrison would march out by two in the afternoon. Finding all attempts to obtain better terms unavailing, Lord Cornwallis submitted to a necessity no longer to be avoided; and on the 19th of October, surrendered the posts of York Town and Gloster point, with the garrisons which had defended them, and the shipping in the harbour with their seamen, to the land and naval officers of America and France.

The army with the artillery, arms, accoutrements, military chest, and public stores of every denomination, were surrendered to General Washton; the ships and seamen to the Count de Grasse. The total amount of prisoners,* exclusive of sea-

* The return of prisoners contained two generals, thirty-one field-officers, three hundred and twenty-six captains and subalterns, seventy-one regimental staff, six thousand five-hundred and twenty-seven non-commissioned officers and privates, and one hundred and twenty four persons belonging to the hospital, commissary, and waggon departments, making in the whole seven thousand and seventy-three prisoners. To this number are to be added six commissioned, and twenty-eight non-commissioned officers and privates, made prisoners in the two redoubts which were stormed, and in the sortie made by the garrison.

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men, rather exceeded seven thousand men, of whom five thousand nine hundred and sixty-three were rank and file. Of this number, four thousand and seventeen are stated to have been fit for duty. The loss sustained by the garrison during the siege, in killed, wounded, prisoners, and missing, amounted to five hundred and fifty-two men, including six officers. The soldiers, accompanied by a due proportion of officers, were to remain in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The officers not required for this service were permitted to go on parole to Europe, or to any maritime port occupied by the English in America. Lord Cornwallis earnestly endeavoured to obtain permission for his European troops to return to their respective countries, under the single restriction of not serving against France or America; but this indulgence was peremptorily refused. His effort to introduce an article for the security of those Americans who had joined the British army, was not more successful. The subject was declared to belong to the civil authority, and the article was rejected. Its object, however, was granted without the appearance of conceding it. Lord Cornwallis was permitted to send the Bonetta sloop of war, unsearched, with dispatches to Sir Henry Clinton; and on board this vessel were embarked the Americans who were most obnoxious to their countrymen.

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There are some circumstances which would indicate that in this transaction the commander in chief held in recollection the capitulation of Charlestown. The garrison was obliged to march out of the town with colours cased, but with drums beating either a British or German march; and General Lincoln was appointed to receive them on their going through the ceremony of grounding their arms.

The allied army to which that of Lord Cornwallis surrendered, may be estimated at sixteen thousand men. The French were stated, by the Count de Rochambeau, at seven thousand. The continental troops amounted to about five thousand five hundred, and the militia to about three thousand five hundred. In the course of the siege, their loss in killed and wounded was about three hundred. It is full evidence of the vigour and skill with which the operations of the besiegers were conducted, that the treaty was opened on the eleventh, and the capitulation signed on the thirteenth, day after the ground was first broken before the works. The whole army merited a high degree of approbation; but from the nature of the service, the artillery and engineers were enabled particularly to distinguish themselves. Generals Du Portail and Knox were each promoted to the rank of major-general; Colonel Gouvain and Captain Rochfontaine of the corps of engineers, were each advanced a step by brevet. In addition to

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the officers belonging to those departments, Generals Lincoln, De la Fayette, and Steuben, were particularly mentioned by the commander in chief, in the orders issued the day after the capitulation; and terms of peculiar warmth were applied to Governor Nelson, who continued in the field during the whole siege at the head of the militia of Virginia, and also exerted himself in a particular manner to furnish the army with all those supplies which the country afforded. The highest acknowledgments were made to the Count de Rochambeau; and several other French officers were named with distinction. So many disasters had attended the former efforts of the United States to avail themselves of the succours occasionally afforded by France, that an opinion not very favourable to the alliance appears to have gained some ground in the country, and to have insinuated itself into the army. The commander in chief seized this occasion to discountenance a course of thinking from which he had always feared pernicious consequences; and he displayed the great value of the aids lately received, in language highly flattering to the sovereign, as well as to the land and naval forces, of France.

Sir Henry Clinton was well informed of the danger which threatened the army in Virginia, and could not be insensible to the influence which its fate would have on the war. He determined, therefore,

therefore, to hazard every thing for its preservation; and, having embarked about seven thousand of his best troops, sailed for the Chesapeak, under convoy of a fleet augmented to twenty-five sail of the line. The armament, which did not leave the Hook till the day on which the capitulation was signed at York-town, appeared off the capes of Virginia on the 24th of October. Unquestionable intelligence being received there that Lord Cornwallis had surrendered, no sufficient motive remained for attacking an enemy so superior in point of force as was the Count de Grasse, and the British general returned to New York.

The exultation manifested throughout the United States at the capture of this formidable army, was equal to the terror it had inspired. At all times disposed to draw flattering conclusions from any favourable event, the Americans now, with more reason than heretofore, yielded to the suggestions of this sanguine temper, and confidently indulged the hope that the termination of their toils and privations was fast approaching. In Congress the intelligence was received with a joy proportioned to the magnitude of the event; and the sense entertained by that body of this brilliant achievement was manifested in various resolutions, returning the thanks of the United States to the commander in chief, to the Count de Rochambeau, to the Count de Grasse, to the officers of the

the allied army generally, and to the corps of artillery and engineers in particular. In addition to these testimonials of a grateful nation, it was resolved that a marble column should be erected at York-town in Virginia, with emblems of the alliance between the United States and his Most Christian Majesty: and inscribed with a succinct narrative of the surrender of Earl Cornwallis to his Excellency General Washington, commander in chief of the combined forces of America and France; to his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau, commanding the auxiliary troops of his Most Christian Majesty in America; and to his Excellency the Count de Grasse, commanding in chief the naval armament of France in the Chesapeak. Two stand of colours taken in York-town were presented to General Washington; two pieces of field-ordnance to the Count de Rochambeau; and application was made to his Most Christian Majesty, to permit the admiral to accept a testimonial of their approbation, similar to that presented to the Count de Rochambeau. Congress determined to go in solemn procession to the Dutch Lutheran church, to return thanks to Almighty God for crowning the allied arms with success by the surrender of the whole British army under Lord Cornwallis; and also issued a proclamation appointing the 13th day of December as a day of general thanksgiving and prayer on account of this signal interposition of divine Providence.

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It was not by Congress alone that the public joy for this great event, and the public approbation of the conduct of General Washington, were displayed. The most flattering and affectionate addresses of congratulation were presented from every part of the union; and state governments, city authorities, and learned institutions, vied with each other in the testimonials they gave of the high sense they entertained of his important services, and of their attachment to his person and character.

The superiority of land and naval force now possessed by the allies, opened a prospect of further advantages which could not fail to terminate the war. The posts still held by the British in the southern states were too weak to be defended against the army which had triumphed over Lord Cornwallis; and as the troops which occupied them could neither escape nor be reinforced, if the Count de Grasse could be prevailed on to cooperate against them their capture would be inevitable. In his first conference with the French admiral, General Washington had laid these circumstances before him, and had pressed in urgent terms the continuance of his aid till the total expulsion of the British from the southern parts of the American continent should be accomplished. But the limited time which could be devoted by De Grasse to the service of the United States, would

would be exceeded by his necessary continuance in the Chesapeak; and he had, in explicit terms, declared his inability to engage in any enterprise to be undertaken subsequent to that against Yorktown. The siege of that place, however, having employed less time than the admiral had consented to appropriate to it, the general resumed his plan of southern operations; and, in a letter*

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* SIR, *Head Quarters, 20th October*, 1781.

The surrender of York, from which so much glory and advantage are derived to the allies, and the honour of which belongs to your excellency, has greatly anticipated our most sanguine expectations. Certain of this event under your auspices, though unable to determine the time, I solicited your excellency's attention in the first conference with which you honoured me, to ulterior objects of decisive importance to the common cause. Although your excellency's answer on that occasion was unfavourable to my wishes, the unexpected promptness with which our operations have been conducted to their final success having gained us time, the want of which was one of your excellency's principal objections, a perspective of the most extensive and happy consequences engages me to renew my representations.

Charlestown, the principal maritime port of the British in the southern parts of the continent, the grand deposit and point of support for the present theatre of the war, is open to a combined attack, and might be carried with as much certainty as the place which has just surrendered.

This capture would destroy the last hope which induces the enemy to continue the war; for having experienced the impracticability of recovering the populous northern states, he has determined to confine himself to the defensive in that quarter,

addressed to De Grasse, he used every argument which might operate on his love of fame, or his desire to promote the interests of the allies, to prevail on him to give his aid to an expedition against Charlestown. If this object should be unattainable, his attention was next turned to Wilmington in North Carolina; which was still occupied by a small detachment of British troops, who kept that state in check. The capture of this de-

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quarter, and to prosecute a most vigorous offensive war in the south, with a view of conquering states whose extended population, and natural disadvantages, render them infinitely less susceptible of defence, although their productions render them the most valuable in a commercial view. His general naval superiority, previously to your excellency's arrival, gave him decisive advantages on the rapid transport of troops and supplies; while the immense land marches of our succours, too tardy and expensive in every point of view, subjected us to be beat in detail.

It will depend upon your excellency, therefore, to terminate the war, and enable the allies to dictate the law in a treaty. A campaign so glorious, and so fertile in consequences, could be reserved only for the Count de Grasse.

It rarely happens that such a combination of means as are in our hands at present, can be seasonably obtained by the most strenuous of human exertions: a decisively superior fleet, the fortune and talents of whose commander overawe all the naval force that the most incredible efforts of the enemy have been able to collect; an army flushed with success, and demanding only to be conducted to new attacks; and the very season which is proper for operating against the points in question.

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tachment was not in itself an object of much consequence; but it was supposed to be of some importance either to the future military operations of the United States, or to their negotiations, completely to liberate North Carolina. A reinforcement to the army under General Greene being intended, it was proposed to send the detachment designed for that service by water as far as Wilmington, under convoy of the French fleet; and it was expected that a few days would be suf-

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If, upon entering into the detail of this expedition, your excellency should still determine it impracticable, there is an object which, though subordinate to that above-mentioned, is of capital importance to our southern operations, and may be effected at infinitely less expence; I mean the enemy's post at Wilmington in North Carolina. Circumstances require that I should, at this period, reinforce the southern army under General Greene. This reinforcement, transported by sea under your excellency's convoy, would enable us to carry the post in question with very little difficulty; and would wrest from the British a point of support in North Carolina, which is attended with the most dangerous consequences to us, and would liberate another state. This object would require nothing more than the convoy of your excellency to the point of operation, and the protection of the debarkation.

I intreat your excellency's attention to the points which I have the honour of laying before you; and to be pleased at the same time to inform me, what are your dispositions for a maritime force to be left on the American station.

I have the honour to be, &c.

G. WASHINGTON.

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ficient to carry that post; after which, the detachment would march by land to South Carolina. To enforce the representations contained in his letter, as well as to pay his respects to the French admiral, and to express to him in person the high sense entertained of his important services, General Washington repaired on board the Ville de Paris, as soon as the prisoners who capitulated at Yorktown could be marched from that place. The time he could devote to this service not being sufficient for an absolute decision on the application, the Marquis de la Fayette, who had accompanied him, remained on board the admiral's ship, for the purpose of using his influence in support of the request which had been made. That nobleman returned on the 23d of October with a note from De Grasse, declaring his conviction of the advantages which would result from an expedition against Charlestown; but that "the orders of the court, ulterior projects, and his engagements with the Spaniards, rendered it impossible for him to remain on the coast during the time which would be required for the operation. He consented, however, to convoy a detachment of two thousand Americans to Wilmington, and to cover their landing; stipulating at the same time that they should be put on board the vessels by the 1st of November. As the time of embarkation approached, the admiral found it necessary to decline performing even this

this engagement. The necessity of being in the West Indies by a given day could not be dispensed with; and a continuance of southerly winds, or other adventitious circumstances, obstructing the landing of the detachment, might compel him to carry it with him to the islands. These considerations having determined him not to take on board the troops designed to reinforce General Greene, preparations were made for marching them by land; and the command of the detachment, which consisted of Wayne's and Gist's brigades, was given to Major-general St. Clair, who was instructed to take Wilmington in his route, and to dispossess the enemy of that post.

The Count de Grasse having consented to remain in the bay a few days, for the purpose of covering the transportation of the eastern troops, and of the ordnance, to the head of Elk, they were embarked in the beginning of November, under the command of General Lincoln. The instructions given to that officer directed him to march the troops from their place of landing into New Jersey and New York, and to canton them for the winter in those states.* The French troops

* Late in October, an irruption was made into the country on the Mohawk, by Major Ross, at the head of about five hundred men, composed of regulars, rangers, and Indians. Colonel Willet, with between four and five hundred men, partly of the troops denominated levies, and partly militia, immediately

remained in Virginia, not only for the preservation of that state, but to be in readiness to march either southward or northward, as the service of the ensuing campaign might require.

This service being effected, the Count de Grasse sailed for the West Indies, and the commander in chief proceeded to Philadelphia.

At the close of the campaign, the Marquis de la Fayette again obtained permission to return to Europe.

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mediately marched in quest of them; and fell in with them at John's-town, where they were slaughtering cattle, apparently unapprehensive of an enemy. Before shewing himself, he detached Major Rowley of Massachussetts with the left wing, to fall on the rear while he should engage the front. On his appearance, the British partly retired to a neighbouring wood; and the American advance was just beginning to skirmish with them, when that whole wing, without any apparent cause, suddenly fled from the field, leaving a field-piece, posted on a height, in order to cover a retreat, to fall into the hands of the enemy. Fortunately for the party, Rowley appeared in the rear at this critical juncture, and regained what the right wing had lost. Night soon coming on, Major Ross retired further into the wood, and encamped on the top of the mountain. He seems after this skirmish to have been only intent on repassing the dreary wilderness in his rear, and securing his party: an object not to be accomplished without immense fatigue and great suffering, as Colonel Willet had cut off their return to their boats, and they were to retreat by the way of Buck island, or Oswegatchie. With a select part of his troops, who were furnished with five days provisions, and

The credit with his sovereign which that nobleman was believed to possess; and the use which, from his avowed attachment to the United States, it was supposed he would make of that credit; were motives with Congress for adding to those resolutions which expressed their sense of his meritorious services, others requesting their ministers in Europe to confer with him on the situation of American affairs, and employ his assistance in accelerating such supplies as might be afforded by his Most Christian Majesty.

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and about sixty Indians who had just joined him, and who, he said, "are the best cavalry for the service of the wilderness," he commenced a rapid pursuit; and in the morning of the 30th, at a ford on Canada creek, fell in with about forty whites and some Indians, who were left in the rear to procure provisions. These were attacked, and the greater number of them killed or taken, upon which the main body fled with such rapidity that the pursuit proved ineffectual. In the party at Canada creek was Major Walter Butler, the person who perpetrated the massacre at Cherry-valley. His entreaties for quarter were disregarded, and he fell the victim of that vengeance which his own savage temper had directed against himself.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XI.

Greene invests Camden—Battle of Hobkirk's hill—Several British posts taken—Lord Rawdon retires into the lower country.—Greene invests Ninety-six—Is repulsed, and retires from before that place—Active movements of the two armies—After a short repose they resume active operations—Battle of Eutau—The British army retires towards Charlestown.

IN South Carolina and Georgia, the campaign of 1781 was uncommonly active. The importance of the object, the perseverance with which it was pursued, the talents of the generals, the courage and sufferings of the armies, and the accumulated miseries of the inhabitants, gave to the contest for these states a degree of interest seldom bestowed on military transactions in which greater numbers have not been employed.

When Lord Cornwallis entered North Carolina, the charge of preserving the authority of his sovereign in the more southern states was committed to Lord Rawdon. For the perfect establishment of his power, a line of posts had been continued from Charlestown, by the way of Camden and Ninety-

Ninety-six, to Augusta in Georgia. The most important point of this line was Camden. To complete and secure the communication, and to cover the country, several small intermediate stations were taken, the garrison of which consisted of a few regular troops and of the neighbouring militia, whose attachment to the royal cause was assiduously cultivated and improved. These posts were in general slightly fortified, so as to resist the sudden attacks that might be made by any force which could be collected in the country; and no apprehensions were entertained of a more formidable enemy. The spirit of resistance was still kept up in the north-western and north-eastern parts of the state by Generals Sumpter and Marion, who respectively commanded a corps of mounted militia. Their celerity of movement protected them from the attempts made against them by Lord Rawdon; who had been unable to form a body of cavalry, and was consequently incapable of overtaking them after they had been routed. Their exertions, though bold, seem not to have been successful; and they excited no alarm, because there was no probability that their strength would be increased.

Such was the situation of the country when General Greene formed the bold resolution of attempting to reannex it to the American union. By a return made on the last day of March, it appears

appears that his effective continental infantry amounted to fifteen hundred men. To this number, the legion of Lee, and the cavalry of Washington, made an addition which might be estimated at not quite three hundred. His prospect of procuring subsistence was unpromising, and the chance of being reinforced was precarious. He was apprised of the dangers about to be encountered, but believed it to be for the public interest to meet them. "I shall take every measure," said this gallant officer, in a letter communicating to General Washington his plans of operation, "to avoid a misfortune; but necessity obliges me to commit myself to chance, and if an accident should attend me, I trust my friends will do justice to my reputation."

The extensive line of posts kept up by Lord Rawdon for the purpose of more completely re-establishing the royal government, presented to Greene many objects at which it was probable he might strike with advantage. In order to make the greatest immediate impression, he reinforced the legion with a company of infantry; and the day preceding his own departure from the camp on Deep river, he had detached Lee to join General Marion. At the same time, his intention of entering South Carolina was communicated to General Pickens; who was requested to assemble the western militia, and lay siege to Ninety-six and

Augusta.

Augusta. He hoped, by a sudden and vigorous exertion of the strength he possessed, to carry many of the small posts held by the British general, to break up the communication between those which were more capable of being defended, to cut off their supplies, and probably to weaken the garrison at Camden by alarming Lord Rawdon for the safety of the country below him.

Having made these arrangements, he moved from Deep river on the seventh of April, and on the nineteenth of the same month encamped before Camden, within about half a mile of the British works. Hopes had been entertained of arriving in the vicinity of that place before his approach should be communicated, and of finding the garrison weakened by detachments to support the posts attacked by Marion and Lee; but the inhabitants of the territory through which he had marched, were almost entirely disaffected, and his progress had been retarded by the necessity of foraging for the subsistence of his army with the same caution which would have been used had he penetrated the country of an open enemy. In consequence of these circumstances, Lord Rawdon had received early notice of his approach, and had prepared for his reception.

Camden stands on a plain; and is covered on the south by the Wateree,* and on the east by

* Higher up, this river is called the Catawba.

Pinetree

Pinetree creek. A strong chain of redoubts nearly of the same size, and independant of each other, extending from the river to the creek, protected the north and west sides of the town.

Being unable either to storm the works, or to invest them on all sides, Greene contented himself with lying before the place, in the hope of being strengthened by militia, or that some event might bring on an action in the open field. While in this situation, he received information that Colonel Watson was marching up the Santee with about four hundred men. This intelligence was peculiarly embarrassing. Should a junction of these two divisions of the British army be effected, he would be too weak for offensive operations; and that junction could only be prevented by intercepting Watson while at a distance from Camden. To succeed in such an attempt required a rapid movement of his whole force, which was impracticable while encumbered with artillery and baggage. Not only the usual impediments which they produce in every army were to be apprehended on this occasion, but a peculiar obstruction was created by the face of the country. Sandhill creek flows through flat marshy grounds, which are impassable by waggons or carriages of any kind, and to head it would require an extensive circuit. It was therefore necessary to separate himself from his artillery and baggage. To leave them before

Camden

Camden was to give them up, and to ruin the campaign. In this perplexing crisis he placed them under the protection of Lieutenant-colonel Carrington, and of the North Carolina militia, aided by a few horse. That officer was directed to convey them to Lynch's creek, near twenty miles north of Camden, and there to take such measures for their security as his discretion should suggest. This arrangement having been made, the American army crossed Sandhill creek; and encamped on the east side of Camden, on the road leading from that place to Charlestown. In this encampment they continued a few days, during which they subsisted on the scanty supplies which the neighbourhood afforded. Compelled at length by the want of provisions to relinquish this position, Greene ordered Lieutenant-colonel Carrington to rejoin him; and on the 24th of April he returned to the north side of the town.

By a drummer, who deserted on the morning after his return, and before he was rejoined by Lieutenant-colonel Carrington, information was conveyed to Lord Rawdon that the artillery and militia had been detached from the main body. Believing this circumstance to afford a fair occasion for fighting his army with advantage, he immediately determined to sieze it. At the head of an effective force of nine hundred men, he marched out of town on the morning of the 25th of April to attack the American army.

For

For the purpose of distributing provisions among his troops, Greene had withdrawn to Hobkirk's hill, which is rather more than a mile from Camden on the road leading to the Waxhaws. The left of this hill, on which was a heavy growth of timber, was flanked by the morass formed by Sandhill creek; and the country lying in its front towards the town was also covered with thick wood and underbrush. Early in the morning, the militia and the artillery had returned to camp, and provisions had been delivered to the troops. The soldiers, though employed in cooking and washing, were within reach of their arms, and were kept in readiness to engage at a moment's warning.

By keeping close to the swamp, and making an extensive circuit, Lord Rawdon gained the left of the American army, where the hill was most easy of ascent, without being perceived; and about eleven his approach was announced by the fire of the advanced piquets, who were half a mile in front of Greene's encampment. The American line of battle was instantly formed. The Virginia brigade, commanded by General Huger, was drawn up on the right of the great road; the Maryland brigade, commanded by Colonel Williams, was on the left; and the artillery was placed in the centre. The North Carolina militia, under Colonel Reade, formed a second line; and Captain Kirkwood, with the light infantry, was placed in front for the purpose

pose of supporting the piquets and retarding the advance of the enemy. General Greene remained on the right with Huger's brigade.

Captain Morgan, of Virginia, and Captain Benson, of Maryland, who commanded the advanced piquets, gave the British front a warm reception; but they were soon compelled by superior numbers to retire. Captain Kirkwood also was driven in; and the British troops appeared in view. Rawdon continued his march through the wood, along the low ground in front of the Maryland brigade, which was then forming, until he reached the road, when he displayed his column.

The sixty-third regiment, supported by the volunteers of Ireland, formed the right; the king's American regiment, supported by Captain Robertson's detachment, the left; and the New York volunteers, the centre of the British line. The South Carolina regiment and the cavalry were in the rear of the whole, and formed a corps of observation.

Perceiving that the British advanced with a narrow front, Colonel Ford, of Maryland, was ordered to attack their right flank; and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell was directed to gain their left, and attack them in that quarter. At the same time Colonel Gunby, and Lieutenant-colonel Hawes, who commanded the two remaining continental regiments, were ordered to advance down the

the hill and attack in front. To complete their destruction, Colonel Washington was directed to turn their left flank, to charge them in the rear, and to cut off their retreat to the town.

These orders were executed with spirit, and the whole line was closely engaged. At the same time, the artillery played on the front with considerable effect. Seeing the danger which threatened his flanks, Lord Rawdon had extended his front, by bringing the Irish volunteers into the line; but his troops were pressed in every quarter, and his left was retiring from the field. Availing himself of this confusion, Colonel Washington, with his accustomed energy, charged in the rear, and had made nearly two hundred prisoners. In this critical moment, when Greene thought the destruction of the whole British army inevitable, his brilliant prospects were blasted, and victory was snatched from his grasp, by one of those incidents against which military prudence can make no provision.

The first Maryland regiment, which, co-operating with the cavalry of Washington, had gained the battle of the Cowpens, and which had been pre-eminently distinguished in the retreat through North Carolina, and at the battle of Guilford, was thrown into disorder. The sudden appearance of the enemy, and their late sufferings from the want of provisions, seem to have produced a depression

pression of spirits which affected their conduct in the field. This regiment, which had been directed to charge with bayonets without firing a musket, although scarcely formed when the action commenced, appeared well disposed to execute the orders which had been received. But when the fire of the enemy commenced, the companies on the right returned it, and their example was followed by the others. Notwithstanding this departure from orders, the regiment continued to advance; when Captain Beaty, who commanded on the right, was killed, and his company, with that adjoining it, got into confusion, and dropped out of the line. Observing this circumstance, Colonel Gunby immediately exerted himself to rally them. Unfortunately he ordered the whole to fall back, and form with the two companies behind the hill which the British troops were ascending. This retrograde movement was mistaken for a retreat, and the regiment gave way. About the same time, the second Maryland regiment was also broken, and in attempting to rally it Colonel Ford was mortally wounded. Lord Rawdon instantly availed himself of this unexpected advantage. The English right immediately gained the summit of the hill, forced the artillery to retire, turned the flank of the second Virginia regiment (which was commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Hawes), and had advanced some distance down the hill. At this

this time the first Virginia regiment was also thrown into some disorder, and was giving ground. Perceiving this sudden reverse of his affairs, and knowing that he could not rely on his second line to restore the action, Greene thought it most advisable to secure his army from the hazard of a total defeat, by ordering Lieutenant-colonel Hawes to retire with his regiment, which still remained unbroken.

The Maryland brigade was in part rallied; but Lord Rawdon had gained the hill, and it was thought too late to retrieve the fortune of the day. By renewing the action, it was indeed possible to regain the field; but it was apparent that the broken regiments had not sufficiently recovered their courage to be confided in, and if brought once more to a close engagement, the disorder might probably be encreased, and the loss augmented to the total ruin of his army. Taking, therefore, the part suggested by prudence, Greene determined to secure his troops for a more auspicious moment, and ordered a retreat.

Finding that the infantry had been forced out of the field, Colonel Washington also retired. It is a strong mark of the confusion prevailing in the British rear, that after paroling the officers he had taken, he was able to bring off fifty prisoners, among whom were all the surgeons, and to extricate himself with the loss of only three men.

The

The retreat being conducted in good order, under cover of a superior cavalry, was made without loss. Retiring about four miles from the field of battle, the American army halted behind Saunders' creek, and the next day proceeded to Rugely's mills. The pursuit was continued about three miles. In the course of it, some slight occasional skirmishes took place; but it was terminated by a vigorous charge made by Lieutenant-colonel Washington with his cavalry, and a small party of infantry, on a corps of British horse who led their van. This corps was broken, and closely pursued; upon which the infantry in its rear retreated precipitately into Camden.

From a field-return made on the 26th of April, it would appear that the effective rank and file of the continental troops engaged in this action rather exceeded twelve hundred men,* of whom

* There is some variance between this statement of General Greene's strength, and that which has been made both by Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Gordon, although the representations are formed on the same document. This variance is thus produced. The field-return made by the adjutant-general of the southern army is dated on the 26th of April, the day after the battle was fought. That return contains a column of present fit for duty, and also exhibits the killed, wounded, and missing, but contains no column of total numbers. Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Gordon have considered the column of present fit for duty, as exhibiting the strength of General Greene before the action. But it is supposed that this column must exhibit his

one hundred and thirty were cavalry and artillery. The loss in killed, wounded, and missing, is stated at two hundred and sixty-six. Among the former was Captain Beaty, of Maryland, who was mentioned by General Greene as an ornament to his profession; and among the latter was Colonel Ford, of Maryland, a gallant officer, whose wounds proved mortal. The militia attached to the army amounted to two hundred and fifty-six, of whom two were missing. The total loss sustained by the British army has been stated at two hundred and fifty-eight, of whom thirty-eight were killed on the field. This loss, though inconsiderable in itself, formed so serious a deduction from their effective force, as to have a decided influence on their subsequent operations.

The plan which the strength of Camden, and his own weakness, had induced Greene originally to adopt, was still substantially pursued. He remained in the vicinity of that place, and by the activity of his cavalry greatly straitened the communication of the garrison with their friends in the neighbourhood. The country afforded but a scanty supply of provisions, nor was it without

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actual strength at the date of the return; which being the day after the battle, the killed, wounded, and missing, must be added to the present fit for duty, in order to shew the actual effective force of the preceding day.

difficulty

difficulty and danger that any part of that supply could be obtained. As no apprehension of a siege had been entertained, no magazines had been previously formed; and the hope might not unreasonably be indulged, that Lord Rawdon would be in a short time compelled to evacuate the town, or attempt the hazardous operation of forcing his way to Charlestown. The distress of his lordship, and the difficulty of extricating himself from it, had been considerably increased by the progress of Marion and Lee.

It will be recollected, that on the 6th of April, Lieutenant-colonel Lee was detached from the camp on Deep river. On the 14th of the same month he joined Marion between the Black river and the Santee; and on the succeeding days these two officers commenced their operations against the line of communication between Camden and Charlestown, by laying siege to Fort Watson. This fort stood near the Santee, on an extensive mound of earth; which had been raised by the Indians near forty feet above the common surface of the adjacent country, and was surrounded by three rows of abattis. The besiegers, as well as the besieged, were without artillery. The former were also without entrenching-tools, and the country for some distance afforded no cover to favour their approaches. Their first hope was to compel a capitulation, by cutting off the communica-

tion of the garrison with a lake from which all its supplies of water had been drawn; but this hope was defeated by the besieged, who sunk a well near a row of abattis, and rendered it necessary to devise some other expedient, or to relinquish the enterprize. In this embarrassment, a tower was erected, which overlooked the fort, and enabled the American riflemen to drive the besieged from their lines. This work was completed under the direction of Major Maham by the morning of the 23d, after which a lodgment was made on the side of the eminence near the outer abattis, which were soon pulled down. Immediately after this was effected, the garrison surrendered.

The acquisition of this post reanimated the friends of the revolution in that part of the state, and afforded the means of interrupting the intercourse between Camden and Charlestown, and of intercepting those supplies which the former required from the latter. It also opposed an obstacle to the retreat of Lord Rawdon, which, with his present strength, he would have found it difficult to surmount. With this active corps directly in his front, and Greene upon his rear, the prospect of reaching a place of security was far from being promising; and it was not without reason that the American general still entertained sanguine hopes of reducing him to capitulate. In order to increase these difficulties, Greene detached a small reinforce-

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ment to Marion; and on the 3d of May he crossed the Wateree, and took post on strong ground on the south side of that river, whence he might most effectually cut off all supplies from the country to the garrison. From the perilous situation in which he was placed, Lord Rawdon was relieved on the 7th of May, by the arrival of a reinforcement amounting to near five hundred men.

Colonel Watson had been for some time employed with a strong detachment in the north-eastern frontier of the state. As the approach of Greene created apprehensions for Camden, Lord Rawdon ordered this detachment to rejoin him at that place. In attempting to obey these orders, Watson found himself opposed by Marion and Lee; who had seized the passes over the creeks in his route, and had thus completely arrested his march. Under these circumstances, it was practicable to reach Camden only by returning down the Santee, and crossing that river near its mouth. This plan was adopted; after which he marched up its southern side, and recrossing it above the American detachment, near the confluence of the Congaree and the Wateree, with great labour and hazard accomplished his object.

This reinforcement gave the British general a decided superiority of strength; and Greene entertained no doubt of its being immediately employed. On the day of its arrival, therefore, he withdrew

withdrew from the neighbourhood of Camden, and took a new and strong position behind Sawney's creek.

In the night of the 7th, as had been conjectured, Rawdon passed the Wateree at Camden ferry with his whole, force intending to turn the flank of his enemy, and to attack his rear, where the ground was less difficult than in front.

On crossing the river, and being informed that the American army had changed its position, he followed it to its new encampment. This was so judiciously chosen, that he despaired of being able to force it; and after some manœuvres to draw Greene from it, which failed in producing the intended effect, he returned to Camden.

Lord Rawdon had been induced thus hastily to relinquish his designs upon Greene, by the insecurity of his own situation. Though, at the moment, superior to his adversary, the state of the British power in South Carolina was such, as obviously to require a temporary surrender of the upper country. The active corps under Marion and Lee, after completely destroying his line of communication on the north side of the Santee, had crossed that river, and permitted no convoy from Charlestown to escape their vigilance. On the 8th of May, after Watson had passed them, they laid siege to a post at Mottes-house on the south side of the Congaree, near its junction with the

the Wateree. This post was rendered peculiarly important by having been made the depository of all the supplies designed for Camden. From the energy of this party, as well as from the defection of the inhabitants, there was reason to apprehend the loss of all his lower posts, unless he should take a position which would support them; and in any event, his communication with the sea would be cut off, and those supplies which were essential to the subsistence of his troops would be intercepted. If, under these circumstances, a reinforcement should restore to the American army its superiority, his ruin would be almost inevitable. He had, therefore, determined to evacuate Camden, unless the issue of a battle with Greene should be such as to remove all fears of future danger from that officer. Having failed in his hope of bringing on a general engagement, this plan was resumed; and on the 10th, after destroying the works, he evacuated Camden, and marched down the river on its north side to Neilson's ferry. Among the objects to be attained by this movement, was the security of the garrison at Mottes-house. But the siege of that place had been so vigorously prosecuted by Marion and Lee, that, on crossing the river, his lordship received the unwelcome intelligence that it had surrendered on the 12th; and that its garrison, consisting of one hundred and sixty-five men, had become prisoners. On the preceding

preceding day, the post at Orangeburg had surrendered to Sumpter.

On the evening of the 14th, the British army moved from Neilson's ferry, with the intention of checking the operations on the Congaree: but some intelligence having changed this plan, Lord Rawdon marched to Monk's-corner; a position which enabled him to cover those districts from which Charlestown drew its supplies, and where he might remain in readiness to improve any favourable occurrence, and might guard against any untoward events.

While the British general was thus under the necessity of retiring, the American force was exerted with a degree of activity which could not be surpassed. After the post at Mottes-house had fallen, Marion was detached against Georgetown on the Black river, which place he reduced; and Lee marched against Fort Granby, a post on the south of the Congaree, which was garrisoned by three hundred and fifty-two men, principally militia. The place was invested on the evening of the 14th. In the course of the night a battery was erected within point-blank shot of the fort, in which was placed a six-pounder brought from the post at Mottes; and the next morning the garrison capitulated. The movement made about that time by Lord Rawdon from Neilson's ferry, had excited some fears of his intending to relieve Fort Granby;

Granby; and on that account terms unusually advantageous were allowed. Security was stipulated for the baggage; and the militia were to be considered as prisoners, and to be conducted with the regulars to Charlestown, or to retire to their homes. The late movement of the British army had left the garrisons of Ninety-six and of Augusta exposed to the whole force of Greene, without the possibility of receiving any immediate support. The acquisition of those two places would restore the whole interior country of the two southern states to the union, and against them Greene determined to direct his operations. Lee was ordered to proceed without loss of time against the latter, while the general should march in person to the former.

On taking possession of the country in 1780, a British post had been established at Ninety-six, and several works had been erected for its security. The principal of these, which from its form was called the Star, consisted of sixteen salient and re-entering angles, and was surrounded by a dry ditch, fraise, and abattis; and was on the right of the village. On the left was a valley, through which ran a rivulet that supplied the place with water. This valley was commanded on the one side by the town prison, which had been converted into a blockhouse, and on the other by a stockade fort in which a blockhouse had been erected. The garrison,

garrison, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Cruger, was ample for the extent of the place,* but was furnished with only three pieces of artillery.

On evacuating Camden, Lord Rawdon had directed that the garrison of Ninety-six should retire to Augusta: but the messengers were intercepted; and Cruger, remaining without orders, determined to put his post in the best possible state of defence. By great exertions, a bank of earth, parapet high, was thrown up round the town, and the whole strengthened by an abattis. Block-houses were erected through the village, traverses made, and covered communications constructed. These new works were completed before the siege commenced.

On the 22d of May, the American army, consisting of about one thousand continental troops, appeared before the town, and encamped in a wood within cannon-shot of the place. In the following night they broke ground within seventy yards of the British works; but the besieged having mounted their artillery in the Star, made under its protection a vigorous and successful sally, in which they drove the advanced party of the besiegers from their trenches, put several of them to the bayonet, and brought off their in-

* It is stated in the English account at five hundred and fifty men, of whom three hundred and fifty were regulars.

trenching.

trenching-tools. This sortie was made with such rapidity, that though General Greene put his whole army in motion, the party making it had accomplished their object and retired into the fort before he could support the troops attacked in the trenches. After this check, the siege was conducted with more caution, but with indefatigable industry. By the 3d of June the second parallel was completed, and the garrison was summoned to surrender. Lieutenant-colonel Cruger, who had conducted the defence with equal skill and courage, returned an answer to this summons, manifesting his resolution to hold out to the last extremity; and the operations of the besiegers were resumed with great vigour.

On the 8th of June, Lee rejoined the army with the troops under his command.

The day after the fall of Fort Granby, that active officer proceeded without loss of time to join General Pickens, in order to lay siege to Augusta. On the march Captain Rudolph was detached from the legion against Fort Golphin, on the northern bank of the Savannah, which surrendered on the first of May. After this, the operations against Augusta were immediately commenced.

The place was bravely defended by Lieutenant-colonel Brown; but the approaches of the besiegers were so well conducted, that on the 5th of June he was reduced to the necessity of capitulating.

The

The prisoners, amounting to about three hundred men, were conducted by the legion to the main army; and in the hope that a knowledge of the fate which had befallen the fort at Augusta might make some impression on the garrison of Ninety-six, they were marched in full view of the British works, in all the parade of military triumph.

Strengthened by this reinforcement, General Greene, who had hitherto made his approaches solely against the Star, commenced his operations against the works on the left also, which commanded the water; and the direction of the advances to be made in that quarter was entrusted to Lieutenant-colonel Lee. The siege was conducted in such a manner as to ensure its success at no distant period, unless the place should be soon relieved. An equal degree of activity was displayed on the part of the garrison; but this activity could only have protracted their fate, had not Lord Rawdon received a reinforcement, which enabled him once more to over-run the state of South Carolina.

The disaffection to the royal cause which shewed itself in Charlestown and its vicinity, had compelled that nobleman to continue near the sea-coast, in order to preserve a place, the loss of which would probably be followed by the destruction of the British power in the two southern states. On the third of June he was liberated

from

from this embarrassing situation by the arrival of three regiments from Ireland; and on the 7th of that month, he marched at the head of about two thousand men to the relief of Ninety-six.

On the 11th of June, Greene received intelligence of his approach. Orders were immediately transmitted to Sumpter, to collect his militia, and keeping directly in front of the British army, to avail himself of every advantage afforded by the face of the country to impede its march. To enable him the more effectually to execute these orders, all the cavalry were detached to his assistance. But Lord Rawdon passed Sumpter a little below the junction of the Saluda and Broad rivers, and that officer was never able to regain his front. Greene had it also in contemplation to meet and fight the British army at some distance from Ninety-six, but he found it impossible to draw together such aids of militia as would enable him to execute that intention with any prospect of success. That species of force could not be induced to march from one district into another. The only remaining hope was, to press the siege so vigorously as to compel a capitulation before Lord Rawdon could arrive. On the side of the Star fort, the third parallel of the besiegers was formed round the abattis. A mine, and two trenches, were carried within a few feet of the ditch. Batteries for his field artillery,* which

* He had no battering cannon.

commanded

commanded the fort, were raised within one hundred and forty yards of it; and a battery, in which riflemen were stationed for the protection of the workmen, had been raised, within thirty yards of the parapet. On the left of the town, the garrison found great difficulty in obtaining water; and on the night of the 17th of June, they were under the necessity of evacuating their works. For several days not a man of the besieged could shew himself with impunity.

Such was the critical state of things, when the near approach of Lord Rawdon extinguished every hope of carrying the place otherwise than by storm. Unwilling to relinquish a prize he was so near obtaining, Greene was resolved to essay every thing which could promise success; but so strong were the works, a parapet twelve feet high being raised near three feet higher by sandbags, that it would be madness to assault them, unless a partial attempt to make a lodgment on one of the curtains of the Star redoubt, and at the same time to carry the fort on the left, should first succeed. As soon as this partial attack was resolved on, the proper dispositions for it were made. Lieutenant-colonel Lee, with the legion infantry and Kirkwood's light infantry, was ordered to assault the works on the left of the town; while Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, with the first regiment of Maryland and the first of Virginia, was to attempt the Star redoubt.

redoubt. The lines of the third parallel were manned, and all the artillery opened on the besieged. These preparations having been made, about noon on the 18th the detachments ordered on this service marched cheerfully to the assault. Against the left, Lee's attack was successful. He forced the works in that quarter, and took possession of them. But on the right, the resistance was more determined; and Campbell, though equally brave, was less fortunate. Lieutenants Duval of Maryland, and Selden of Virginia, led the forlorn hope; and were followed by a party carrying hooks to pull down the sandbags, in order to facilitate the lodgment proposed to be made on the curtain. They advanced gallantly into the ditch; but its depth, and the height of the parapet, opposed obstructions to this operation which could scarcely be surmounted. Major Greene, who commanded in the Star, had lined the parapet with troops armed with bayonets and spears; and the right flank of the assailants was exposed to the galling fire of four field-pieces from the blockhouse in the village. Under these trying circumstances, they continued in the ditch nearly three quarters of an hour, making incessant efforts to accomplish their objects. In this time, Lieutenants Duval and Selden were both badly wounded, and nearly all the forlorn hope were either killed or wounded. "Never," says General Greene, "was greater bravery

bravery exhibited." At length the obstinacy with which the works were defended, and the great loss which must attend a further prosecution of the assault, induced a relinquishment of it, and the few remaining troops were recalled * from the ditch.

To remain longer before Ninety-six could only endanger the American army; and the next day, Greene raised the siege, and crossing the Saluda, encamped on Little river. In this siege the loss of the Americans in killed and wounded amounted to one hundred and fifty-five men, among the former of whom was Captain Armstrong, of Maryland. That of the garrison has been stated by themselves at eighty-five.

On the morning of the 21st of June, Lord Rawdon arrived at Ninety-six; and on the evening of the same day he marched in quest of the American army. In the preceding operations of the campaign he had felt so severely the want of cavalry, that while at Monk's-corner, and in Charlestown, he had made great exertions to supply this deficiency. The contributions in Charlestown had enabled him to mount so many of the South Ca-

* Mr. Stedman says, they were charged by the garrison, and driven out with the bayonet. As General Greene omits this circumstance, and states them to have been recalled, the probability is that the charge was made as they retired.

rolina

rolina regiment, that a corps of one hundred and fifty horse composed a part of his army. To increase the rapidity of the pursuit, his infantry parted even with their knapsacks and blankets.

Foreseeing that his active adversary would avail himself to the utmost of his superiority, Greene had relieved himself from his sick and wounded, by sending them northward; and as soon as Rawdon had crossed the Saluda, he retreated along the road to Charlotte in Virginia, on which provisions had been previously laid up. To increase the difficulty of subsisting the British army, the mills on the route were dismantled. At the Ennoree, a further pursuit was thought hopeless, and Lord Rawdon returned from that river to Ninety-six.

The retreat ceased with the pursuit. General Greene halted near the cross roads on the north of Broad river; a point from which he might either file off towards the Congaree, or return to the siege of Ninety-six, as circumstances might render advisable.

As Rawdon retired, he was followed close by the legion as far as Ninety-six, where he continued only two days. Still retaining the opinion that circumstances required him to contract his posts, he left the principal part of his army, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Cruger, to protect the loyalists; while, removing within those limits which were to be maintained by the British

tish forces, and at the head of less than one thousand men, he marched in person towards the Congaree. It is probable that he believed Greene to be driven out of South Carolina; but it is also stated, that he was induced to make this hazardous movement by the expectation of being joined on the Congaree by a strong reinforcement from Charlestown, which he had ordered to meet him on that river. The march of that reinforcement had been countermanded, and the letter intended to inform his lordship of this circumstance had been intercepted.

Apprehensive that it was intended to preserve the post at Ninety-six, where the royalists were numerous, and to establish one on the Congaree, where provisions were more plentiful than in any other part of the state, Greene determined to interrupt the execution of the plan which he supposed to have been formed. Having left his sick and baggage at Wynnsborough, to be conducted to Camden, he marched with the utmost expedition for Friday's ferry,* on the Congaree, at which place Lord Rawdon had arrived two days before him. As Greene drew near to his enemy, a detachment from the legion, under the command of Captain Eggleston, announced his approach by attacking a foraging party not more than a mile

* The place where Fort Granby had stood.

from

from the British camp, and bringing off a troop consisting of forty-five men, with all their officers and horses. The next day Rawdon retreated to Orangeburgh, where he formed a junction with the detachment he had expected from Charlestown, which was commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Stewart. Having learnt from an intercepted letter that Stewart was marching from Charlestown with a convoy of prisoners, Greene detached Marion with his mounted militia, and all the cavalry, to meet him; but they were too late, and Stewart reached Orangeburgh with only the loss of a few of his waggons, which were captured by Colonel Horry.

On the Congaree, Greene was reinforced by Sumpter and Marion with about one thousand men; and on the 11th of July he marched towards Orangeburgh, with the intention of attacking the division of the British army which lay at that place. He arrived there on the next day, but found it so strongly posted as to be unassailable. Lord Rawdon had thrown his troops into a large brick jail, and into other adjacent buildings on the banks of the Edisto, the only ford over which was commanded from the jail. An attack on this position must have been very hazardous: and even if successful, promised no advantages which would compensate for the loss that must be sustained in forcing the houses; as it would be easy to retire

over the river, and to defend this single ford. While at this place, intelligence was received of the evacuation of Ninety-six, and that Lieutenant-colonel Cruger was marching down to Orangeburgh. The north branch of the Edisto, which for thirty miles was passable at no other point than that occupied by Rawdon, interposed an insuperable obstacle to any attempt on Cruger; and Greene thought it most advisable to force the British general out of the upper country, by threatening his lower posts at Monk's-corner and at Dorchester. On the 13th, Sumpter, Marion, and Lee, were detached on this service; and on the same day Greene moved towards the high hills of Santee, where he hoped to be joined by a few continental troops and militia from North Carolina.

The detachments ordered to the north-eastern posts of the state were not so completely successful as had been expected, or as their courage and enterprise deserved. On their approaching the British posts, Colonel Wade Hampton, at the head of a body of state cavalry, charged a corps of British cavalry, and made about fifty prisoners. The posts were broken up; horses, military stores, and baggage to a great amount, were captured; and about one hundred and fifty prisoners were taken; but the main body of the troops made their escape to Charlestown. They were overtaken, and attacked on the retreat. A troop of the legion, commanded

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by Captain Armstrong, who first came up with their rear, was spoken of by General Greene in terms of peculiar praise. He attacked them with great gallantry, and drove them from their artillery, but was compelled by their musketry to retire. Before the infantry could come up in force, they posted themselves strongly in a range of buildings, from which there was no artillery to expel them, and against which the cavalry could not act with advantage. They were, however, attacked, and the action was continued till the ammunition of the assailants was expended. The Americans were then drawn off; and as information was received that Lord Rawdon was approaching with a considerable force, General Sumpter retired towards Neilson's ferry.

The intense heat that prevailed at this sultry season, seemed to demand some relaxation from the unremitting toils which the southern army had encountered. From the month of January it had been engaged in one course of incessant fatigue, and of hardy enterprize. All its powers had been kept upon the stretch, nor had any interval of repose been allowed to refresh and recruit their almost exhausted spirits. The continued labours and exertions of all were highly meritorious; but the successful activity of one corps will attract particular attention. The legion, from its structure, was peculiarly adapted to the partizan war

war of the southern states; and by being detached against the weaker posts of the enemy, had opportunities for displaying with advantage all the energies it possessed. In that extensive sweep which it made from the Santee to Augusta, which employed from the 15th of April to the 5th of June, this corps, acting in conjunction first with Marion, afterwards with Pickens, and sometimes alone, had constituted the principal force which carried five British posts, and made upwards of eleven hundred prisoners.

The whole army had displayed an uncommon share of activity and courage, and their general had manifested a great degree of firmness, enterprise, and prudence. Though defeated in two battles, and repulsed with slaughter in an attempt to storm Ninety-six, it had always kept the field; and without gaining a single victory, had limited the British power in the south to the sea-coast, and to the country between the Santee, the Congaree, and the Edisto.

The sufferings occasioned by this ardent struggle for the southern states, were not confined to the armies. The inhabitants of the country felt all the miseries which are inflicted by war in its most savage form. Being almost equally divided between the two contending parties, reciprocal injuries had gradually sharpened their resentments against each other, and had armed neighbour against neighbour,

bour, until it became a war of extermination. As the parties alternately triumphed, opportunities were alternately given for the exercise of their vindictive passions. They derived additional virulence from the examples occasionally afforded by the commanders of the British forces. After overrunning Georgia and South-Carolina, they seem to have considered those states as completely reannexed to the British empire; and they manifested a disposition to treat as rebels those who had once submitted and again taken up arms, although the temporary ascendancy of the continental troops should have induced this measure. One of these executions, that of Colonel Haynes, took place on the 3d of August, while Lord Rawdon was in Charlestown, preparing to sail for Europe. The American army being at this time in possession of great part of the country, the punishment inflicted on this gentleman was taken up very seriously by General Greene, and had nearly produced a system of retaliation. In pursuance of this policy, the British officers are stated to have executed several of the zealous partizans of the revolution who had fallen into their hands. These examples had unquestionably some influence in unbridling the revengeful passions of the royalists, and letting loose the spirit of slaughter which was brooding in their bosoms.

The disposition to retaliate to the full extent of their

their power, if not to commit original injury, was equally strong in the opposite party. When fort Granby surrendered, the militia attached to the legion are stated both by Mr Ramsay and Mr Gordon, to have manifested so strong a disposition to break the capitulation, and to kill the most obnoxious among the prisoners who were inhabitants of the country, as to produce a solemn declaration from Greene, that he would put any man to death who should be guilty of an act so very atrocious. When fort Cornwallis surrendered, no exertions could have saved Lieutenant-colonel Brown,* though a British officer, had he not been sent to Savannah under a guard of continental troops.

Lieutenant-colonel Grierson of the royal militia was shot by an unknown marksman; and though a reward of one hundred guineas was offered to any person who would inform against the perpetrator of the fact, he could never be discovered. "The whole country," said the general in one of his letters, "is one continued scene of blood and slaughter." Greene was too humane, as well as too judicious, not to discourage this exterminating spirit. He perceived in it the total destruction of the country, and sought to appease it by restraining the excesses of those who were attached to the American cause.

* This officer had executed several of the inhabitants.

At the high hills of Santee, the reinforcements expected from North Carolina were received. The American army, including every person belonging to it, was now augmented to two thousand six hundred men; but its effective force did not much exceed sixteen hundred.*

After General Greene had retired from Orangeburgh, Lord Rawdon was induced by ill health to avail himself of a permit which had been granted him to return to Great Britain, and the command of the British forces in South Carolina devolved on Lieutenant-colonel Stuart. He again advanced to the Congaree, and resuming the station near the junction of that river with the Wateree, manifested a determination to establish a permanent post at that place. Though the two armies were but fifteen miles from each other in a right line, two rivers lay between them which could not be crossed without making a circuit of seventy miles; in consequence of which, Lieutenant-colonel Stuart felt himself so secure, that his parties spread over

* A return made the 26th of July states the present fit for duty of their infantry at a thousand one hundred and ninety-eight, and those on command at a hundred and seventy-nine. The same return states the cavalry at a hundred and seventy-eight, and the artillery at fifty-eight; so that the total effective force was, infantry a thousand three hundred and seventy-seven, cavalry a hundred and seventy-eight, artillery fifty-eight—total a thousand six hundred and thirteen.

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the country in order to collect provisions for the use of his army. To restrain them, and to protect the inhabitants, General Greene detached Marion towards Combatree ferry, and Washington over the Wateree. Frequent skirmishes ensued; which, from the superior courage and activity of the American cavalry, uniformly terminated in their favour. In stating their successes, and especially one in which Captain Watts of Washington's regiment had attacked and routed a superior body of British horse, General Greene said, "The enterprise of our cavalry equals any thing the world ever produced."

Finding that Lieutenant-colonel Stuart designed still to maintain his important position on the Congaree, Greene prepared to recommence active operations. These seem to have been suspended for a few days by the arrival of Governor Rutledge; who, before his departure from Philadelphia, had received assurances from the Chevalier de la Luzerne, of the powerful land and naval armament which his Most Christian Majesty designed to employ, in the course of the campaign, in the service of the United States. Should this force be destined for the southern districts, every principle which ought to influence him required that he should reserve his strength in order to co-operate with that of France. But letters from the commander in chief soon indicated the designs which had been formed against New York; and Greene

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was so firmly persuaded that it would be impossible to retain the French fleet long enough after New York should fall, to prosecute any southern operations, that he thought it imprudent to regulate his conduct by calculations of foreign assistance, and determined once more to give battle to the British army.

The necessary orders having been transmitted to his detachments, he marched from the high hills of Santee on the 22d of August, and crossing the Wateree near Camden, proceeded towards Friday's ferry, where he was joined by General Pickens with the militia of Ninety-six, and by the state troops of South Carolina, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Henderson.

On being informed of his approach, the British army retired about forty miles to Eutaw, where it was reinforced by a detachment which had escorted a convoy of provisions from Charlestown to that place. Greene followed by slow and easy marches; for the double purpose of concealing his object, and giving Marion time to rejoin him. In the afternoon of the 7th, when about seven miles from Eutaw, that officer brought up his detachment; and it was determined to attack the British camp the next day.

At four o'clock in the morning of the 8th of September, the American army moved from its ground in the following order. The South and North

North Carolina militia, commanded by Generals Marion and Pickens and by Colonel Malmedy, composed the front line. The second was formed by the continental troops. The North Carolina brigade, commanded by General Sumner, was placed on the right; that of Virginia, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, was in the centre; and that of Maryland, under the command of Colonel Williams, was posted on the left. The legion of Lee covered the right flank, and the state troops of South Carolina under Lieutenant-colonel Henderson covered the left. The cavalry of Washington, and the infantry of Kirkwood, formed the reserve. Captain-lieutenant Gains, with two three-pounders, advanced with the front line, and two sixes under Captain Brown were attached to the second. In advancing, the legion and state troops marched in the van, with orders to fall back on the flanks when the British line should be formed.

About four miles from the camp at Eutaw, the van fell in with a detachment sent out in search of vegetables, who, mistaking them for militia, attacked them briskly; but receiving a heavy fire from the state troops, and being at the same time charged with the bayonet by the infantry of the legion under Captain Rudolph, they were instantly routed. Supposing this party to be the van of the English, Greene formed his front line, with the

the legion and state troops on the flanks, and ordered them to move on briskly, and to continue to advance as they fired.

Notice that the Americans were approaching was soon received by Colonel Stuart, and the British line was immediately formed. It was drawn across the road in an oblique direction, on the heights near the Eutaw springs. The right flank was covered by a battalion commanded by Major Majoribanks, the left of which approached the road, and was concealed by a thick hedge. The road was occupied by two pieces of artillery, and a covering party of infantry.

The firing recommenced between two and three miles from the British camp. The British light parties were soon driven in upon the main body; and the whole front line, including the legion and state troops, was closely engaged. The militia, commanded by experienced generals of approved courage, exhibited a degree of firmness not common to that species of force. Perceiving the materials of which great part of that line was composed, and probably anticipating their speedy flight, Lieutenant-colonel Stuart had directed his troops not to alter their position, but to preserve the station they had originally taken. These orders were given to prevent his flanks from being exposed to the cavalry, whose courage he dreaded, and probably to ensure their remaining in perfect order

order till they should be attacked by the continental troops. But the militia maintaining their ground with unexpected obstinacy, the directions not to advance were, in the ardour of action, disregarded, and the British line pressed forward as the militia retired. General Sumner was ordered up to support them; and although the privates of North Carolina were new levies, his troops came into the action with great intrepidity, but they could make no impression. In this stage of the engagement, Colonel Williams and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell were ordered to charge with trailed arms. These orders were executed with the most determined courage, under a tremendous fire of artillery and musketry. Part of the British line, consisting of new troops, incapable of standing the shock of this charge, broke, and fled in confusion.* But the veteran corps which had been inured to hard service, received it on the points of their bayonets. For a short time the hostile ranks were intermingled, and the officers fought hand to hand. In this arduous moment, Lee, who had turned the British left flank, char-

* Some of them could not be stopped. They fled into the lower country; where their reports communicated such an alarm, that the British burnt their stores at Dorchester, and evacuated the post at Fair-lawn. The gates of Charlestown were shut, and a number of negroes were employed in felling trees across the road leading through the neck into the town.

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ged them in the rear. So fierce a conflict could not be long maintained. The British line was completely broken, and driven off the field. Their artillery fell into the hands of the Americans, who followed them into their camp, making prisoners at every step.

Early in the action on the left, Colonel Henderson, a valuable officer, was disabled by a dangerous wound from continuing in the field, and the command of the state troops of South Carolina devolved on Lieutenant-colonel Hampton, a gentleman who had already given proofs of distinguished merit. In that quarter also a bold charge was made, and the retreating army was vigorously pressed.

In this critical state of the action, Lieutenant-colonel Stuart ordered Major Sheridan, with a detachment from the New York volunteers, to take post in a large three-story brick house standing in the rear of the ground on his right, while others placed themselves in an adjoining picketed garden. Great efforts were made to dislodge them from this strong position. The artillery was brought up, and played upon the house but without effect. From its doors and windows, as well as from the strong adjoining grounds, a most deadly fire was poured upon the Americans, who were exposed to all its fury. The check given at this place enabled Lieutenant-colonel Stuart to rally his broken battalions,

talions, and to bring them again into action; so that the whole battle was renewed upon ground peculiarly unfavourable to Greene.

As the continental troops came into the engagement, Colonel Washington was ordered to bring up the reserve, and to act on the American left. After viewing the situation of the enemy, he determined to turn the right flank of the corps commanded by Majoribanks, and to charge its rear. The platoons on the right were at first broken, but they retreated into a thicket of scrubby oaks scarcely penetrable by cavalry. While attempting to force through it, the regiment received the British fire which had been at first reserved, and suffered very severely. Colonel Washington was wounded; his horse was killed and fell upon him, and before he could disengage himself he was made a prisoner. The command of the regiment was taken by Colonel Hampton; and the infantry of Kirkwood coming up, great efforts were made to dislodge Majoribanks, but they were ineffectual. Finding it impossible to employ horse to advantage on that ground, Colonel Hampton drew off his troops, and retired to the road. He was pursued by the British cavalry, whom he repulsed; after which, he again charged the battalion commanded by Majoribanks, but could make no impression on it.

It was about this time that the British left, which

which had retreated obliquely into the rear of their right, had again formed under cover of the brick house occupied by Major Sheridan. In the pursuit, the American right had passed Majoribanks,* and had formed a line almost at a right angle with the battalion commanded by that officer, so that their left flank was exposed to him.

With unyielding stubbornness, the American troops were still labouring to dislodge the British from the cover under which they fought. "Never," says General Greene in his letter to Congress, "did men or officers offer their blood more willingly in the service of their country." But as the gallantry employed in the defence was equal to that displayed in the attack, their utmost efforts were unsuccessful. At length the reserve having been repulsed on the left with great loss, the legion having also failed on the right, the greater part of the officers and men of the artillery being killed or wounded, the infantry being excessively galled, and their ammunition nearly expended, Greene withdrew them from the fire of the house, and formed again at a small distance from it in the woods.

Thinking it unadvisable to renew the desperate attempt which had just failed, he collected his wounded, and, after leaving a strong piquet on the field, retired with his prisoners to the ground from which he had marched in the morning.

* Letter of Colonel Stuart.

His declared intention was again to fight the British army when it should retreat from the Eutaws. The distance of the place to which he retired from the field of battle would seem to contradict this assertion; but that circumstance is accounted for in his public letter, in which he says, that no nearer position afforded water to refresh his troops, who were fainting under the fatigues of an engagement of near four hours duration, in weather most distressingly hot.

Every corps engaged in this hard-fought battle received the applause of their general. Almost every officer whose situation enabled him to attract notice, was named with distinction. "Never," he said, "was artillery better served;" but he thought himself principally indebted for the victory which had been gained to the free use made of the bayonet by the Virginians and Marylanders, and by the infantry of the legion and of Kirkwood. Though few armies ever exhibited equal bravery with what was generally displayed, yet the conduct and intrepidity of these corps were peculiarly conspicuous. To Colonel Williams he acknowledged himself to be particularly indebted. To the valour of his enemy also he gave that praise which it merited; "They really fought," he said, "with courage worthy a better cause."*

* In a private letter he observed, when speaking of the British troops, "They fight a hard battle, as any man will find who fights them."

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The loss on both sides bore a great proportion to the numbers engaged. The American dead amounted to a hundred and thirty-seven men; and their killed, wounded, and missing, to five hundred and fifty-five. Among them were sixty commissioned officers, of whom seventeen were killed on the spot, and four mortally wounded. "This loss of officers," said their general, "is still more heavy on account of their value than their numbers."

Among the slain was Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, who fell while leading the Virginia brigade to that bold and decisive charge which broke the British line. He just lived long enough to hear that the enemy were retreating, and his last breath was employed in expressing the joy that event had given him. The death of this gallant officer was deplored by General Greene in terms which evinced a high degree of respect for his memory.

The loss of the British army was stated by themselves at six hundred and ninety-three men, of whom only eighty-five were killed in the field. If this statement be correct,* the American dead greatly exceeded that of the adversary; a circumstance not improbable, as the carnage of the former during their unvailing efforts to dislodge the

* The British accounts state only two hundred and fifty-seven missing; but General Greene, in his letter of the 11th of September, says, that including seventy wounded, who were left at Eutaw, he had made five hundred prisoners.

latter from the house and strong adjoining ground was immense.

As usual, each party estimated the loss of the enemy at more than was acknowledged. In his official letter, Lieutenant-colonel Stuart calculated that of the American army at one thousand men; and General Greene supposed that the British loss could not be rated at less than eleven hundred.

Each party had pretensions to the victory, and each claimed the merit of having gained it with inferior numbers. The truth probably is, that their numbers were nearly equal. The army brought by Greene into the field has been uniformly estimated at about two thousand men; and if the state troops and militia have been correctly rated at five hundred, this estimate is not erroneous. No official report of the British strength, so far as is known, has appeared. But Lord Rawdon marched near two thousand men to the relief of Ninety-six; and he was afterwards reinforced by the garrison of that place. Lieutenant-colonel Stuart succeeded to the command of these conjoint forces, and there are no deductions to be made which would probably reduce them below the number that marched from Charlestown. It may therefore be presumed that there was no great disparity of strength between the two armies.

Nor can the claim of either to the victory be pronounced unequivocal. The pretensions of General Greene are supported by having driven the

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British army off the ground on which it was originally drawn up, having pursued them into a house which he attacked, and having afterwards drawn off his army without being followed.

Those of Lieutenant-colonel Stuart are founded on his having rallied his broken troops, and brought them back into the action; after which his adversary gave up the contest, and withdrew from the field.

The truth seems to be that, unconnected with its consequences, the fortune of the day was nearly balanced. The advantages gained by the Americans in the field were wrested from them at the house in which Major Sheridan was posted; and the slaughter sustained in the attempt to dislodge the adversary from that post and from the neighbouring gardens, thicket, and hedges, compensated for the previous losses of the British army. But if the consequences be taken into the account, the victory unquestionably belonged to Greene. In this, as in the two preceding battles fought by him in the Carolinas, the result was the expulsion of the hostile army from the territory which was the immediate object of contest.

Four six-pounders, two of which had been taken in the early part of the day, had been brought to play upon the house, and were pushed so near as to be within the command of the fire from it, and from the garden. They were therefore left behind when the retreat was ordered; but a three-pounder which

which had been also taken was brought off. Thus these trophies of victory were in some measure divided.

The thanks of Congress were voted to every corps in the army; and a resolution was passed for "presenting to Major-general Greene, as an honourable testimony of his merit, a British standard, and a golden medal emblematic of the battle, and of his victory."

Foreseeing that reinforcements would be immediately ordered from Charlestown, General Greene detached Marion and Lee on the morning of the day succeeding the action, to fall into the road between that place and Eutaw, and intercept any aids which might be approaching from that quarter. The further object of retarding the retreat of Lieutenant-colonel Stuart, should it be attempted, till he could be overtaken by the American army, was also contemplated. But they were prevented from effecting the primary purpose for which they had been detached, by a movement of the whole British army. Major M'Arthur was conducting a body of troops to Eutaw; and on the evening of the 9th, Lieutenant-colonel Stuart left that place in order to meet him. The magnitude of their force, and their vicinity to each other, before Marion and Lee could approach M'Arthur, rendered abortive any attempt to prevent their junction.

This was effected about fourteen miles below the

the ground on which the battle of the 8th had been fought, and the retreat was continued to Monk's-corner. On receiving notice that the British army had abandoned its strong post at Eutaw, General Greene put all his troops in motion, and followed them as far as Monk's-corner. Finding their numbers and the strength of their position to be such as to render an attack unadvisable, he returned to the high hills of Santee.

To the losses sustained in battle, the ravages of disease were added, and the army remained for some time in too feeble a condition for active enterprise.

After the capitulation of York town, the British post at Wilmington in North Carolina was evacuated, their troops in Georgia were concentred in Savannah, and their views in the south seemed limited to the country adjacent to the sea-coast. As the cool season of the year approached, the diseases of the American army abated; and it became an object of some consequence, at least to share the provisions of the lower country.

On the 18th of November, Greene marched from the high hills of Santee towards the Four Holes, a branch of the Edisto. Leaving the army to be conducted to that place by Colonel Williams, he proceeded in person on the 28th, at the head of his cavalry, supported by about two hundred infantry, towards the British post at Dorchester; where six hundred and fifty regular troops, including

cluding one hundred and fifty cavalry and two hundred royal militia, were understood to be stationed.

In the hope of surprising the garrison, his march was conducted with the utmost secrecy through by-ways: but in the country through which he passed, there were so many disaffected, that it was impossible to conceal this movement; and the night before he reached Dorchester, the commanding officer at that place received intelligence of his approach. The advance, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Hampton, was met by a small party, whom he instantly charged: after killing eight or ten, wounding fifteen or twenty, and taking others, he drove the residue over the bridge under cover of their works. The whole cavalry instantly sallied out; but were received so warmly, that they also retreated precipitately to the main body.

In the course of the following night, the stores at Dorchester were burnt, and the British troops retired about seven miles to the quarter-house, where their principal force was encamped. Greene returned to the army, which encamped at the Round O, where he proposed to await the arrival of the reinforcements marching from the north under the command of General St. Clair. In the mean time, General Marion and Lieutenant-Colonel Lee were stationed on each side of Ashley river, so as to cover the whole country between the Cooper and the Edisto. Thus was the influ-

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ence of the British arms confined to Charlestown neck, and to the islands near that town.*

It is impossible to review the campaign of 1781 in South Carolina, without feeling that much is due to General Greene, and that he amply justified the favourable opinion entertained of him by the commander in chief. He found the country completely conquered, and defended by a regular army which he calculated at four thousand men.† The

* During this campaign, a very effective expedition against the Cherokees was conducted by General Pickens. When the struggle for South Carolina commenced, those savages were stimulated by British agents in their country, to renew their incursions into the settlements of the whites. At the head of about four hundred mounted militia, Pickens penetrated into their country, burnt thirteen of their villages, killed upwards of forty Indians, and took a number of prisoners, without the loss of a single man. On this occasion, a new mode of attack was introduced. The militia horse rushed upon the Indians, and charged them with drawn swords. Terrified at the vigour with which they found themselves pursued, the Cherokees humbly sued for peace, which was granted on terms calculated to restrain their future depredations.

† In a letter addressed by General Greene to the commander in chief in August, when the Count de Grasse was expected, and it was uncertain against what part of the British possessions on the continent its operations would be directed, he stated the regular troops in that country at four thousand men. But they were necessarily so divided, that they certainly never fought the Americans with superior numbers. It forms no inconsiderable part of Greene's merit, that he was never forced to come to action. For this he was indebted not only to his own judgment, but also to a brave and active cavalry, capable of effecting any thing which human effort could accomplish.

inhabitants

inhabitants were so divided that it would be difficult to declare to which side the majority was attached.* At no time did the effective continental force which he could bring into the field amount to two thousand men; and of these a considerable part were raw troops. Yet, by a course of judicious movement, of resolute action, and of hardy enterprise, in which the most invincible constancy was displayed, and courage was happily tempered with prudence, he recovered the southern states; and at the close of the year, civil government was completely re-established in them. A just portion of the praise deserved by these achievements is unquestionably due to the troops he commanded. They bore every hardship and privation† with a

* The British and the American general both complain loudly of their defection, and state the greatest numbers to be favourable to the adverse army.

† The distresses of the southern army, like those of the northern, were such, that it was often difficult to keep it together. That he might relieve them when in the last extremity, and yet not diminish the exertions made to draw support from other sources by creating an opinion that any supplies could be derived from him, Mr. Morris employed an agent to attend the southern army as a volunteer, whose powers were unknown to General Greene. This agent was instructed to watch its situation; and whenever it appeared impossible for the general to extricate himself from his embarrassments, to furnish him, on his pledging the faith of the government for re-payment, with a draft on the financier for such a sum as would relieve the urgency of the moment. Thus was Greene frequently rescued from impending ruin by aids which appeared providential, and for which he could not account.

patience

patience and constancy which cannot be sufficiently admired. And never was a general better supported by his inferior officers than Greene. Not shackled by those who had been appointed to stations of high rank in consideration of political influence, many of whom were without military talents, his orders were executed by young men of equal spirit and intelligence, formed under the eye of Washington, and trained in the school furnished by the severe service in the north to all the hardships and dangers of war.

A peculiar importance was given to these successes in the south, by the opinion that a pacific temper was finding its way into the cabinets of the belligerent powers in Europe. The communications from the Court of Versailles rendered it probable that negotiations for a peace would take place in the course of the ensuing winter; and dark hints had been given, on the part of Great Britain, to the minister of the Most Christian King, that all the states in America could not reasonably expect to become independant, as several of them were subdued by her arms. Referring to the precedent of the Low Countries, he observed, that of the seventeen provinces which originally united against the Spanish crown, only seven obtained their independance.

Motives for great exertions in the course of the year, in addition to those which grew out of the situation of America, were also furnished by other communication

communications from the French monarchy. She was plainly told that, after the present campaign, no further pecuniary or military aids were to be expected from France. The situation of affairs in Europe, it was said, would demand all the exertions which that nation was capable of making; and that the forces of his Most Christian Majesty might render to the common cause as much real service elsewhere as in America.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XII.

Preparations for another campaign—Proceedings in the British parliament—Conciliatory conduct of General Carlton—Negotiations for peace—Preliminary and eventual articles agreed upon between the United States and Great Britain—Discontents of the American army—Anonymous letters, and the proceedings in consequence thereof—Measures for disbanding the army—Mutiny of a part of the Pennsylvania line—Peace concluded—Evacuation of New-York—General Washington resigns his commission, and retires to Mount Vernon.

THE splendid success of the allied arms in Virginia, and the great advantages obtained still further south, produced no disposition in the mind of the commander in chief to relax those vigorous exertions which might yet be necessary to secure the great object of the contest. "I shall attempt to stimulate Congress," said he in a letter to General Greene, written from Mount Vernon, "to the best improvement of our late success, by taking the most vigorous and effectual measures to be ready for an early and decisive campaign the next year. My greatest fear is, that, viewing this stroke in a point of light which may

may too much magnify its importance, they may think our work too nearly closed, and fall into a state of languor and relaxation. To prevent this error, I shall employ every means in my power; and if, unhappily, we sink into this fatal mistake, no part of the blame shall be mine."

On the 27th of November he reached Philadelphia; and a resolution of Congress was immediately passed, granting him an audience on the succeeding day. On his appearance, the president addressed him in a short speech, in which he was informed that a committee was appointed to state the requisitions to be made for the proper establishment of the army, and the expectation was expressed that he would remain in Philadelphia, in order to aid the consultations on that important subject.

The secretary of war, the financier, and the secretary of foreign affairs, assisted at these deliberations. With such unusual celerity was the business conducted, that Congress passed the resolutions respecting the military establishment for the succeeding year so early as the 10th of December. But the respectability of the army still depended on the vigour with which the several states would execute the measures recommended to them; and to stimulate them to the utmost exertions of which they were capable, the personal influence of the commander in chief was called in to aid the civil authority. His circular letter, written on this

occasion

occasion to the state sovereignties, urges every argument which the situation of America could suggest for a faithful compliance with the votes of Congress.

Other demands were made by the government of the union on the states, a compliance with which would not be less difficult than with that respecting their quotas of men. The heavy expences which a continuance of the war seemed to render inevitable, produced the necessity of adhering to the practice of extorting from individuals the means of supporting it, or of adopting a vigorous course of taxation. The latter system was recommended by considerations which ought never to lose their influence on the human mind: and on the 30th of October, Congress came to a resolution requiring, for the service of the ensuing year, eight millions of dollars in specie, to be paid quarterly. On this subject also a circular letter was addressed by General Washington to the several states, demonstrating both the policy and necessity of the measure recommended.

But no exertions on the part of America alone could do more than confine the operations of the British arms to the sea-coast, and to occasional incursions into undefended parts of the country. A superiority at sea was indispensable to any successful offensive operations against the posts they still held within the United States; and to obtain this superiority, no means in the power of the American

American general were left unessayed. In his communications with the French minister, and with the French officers, he never lost sight of this important object; and when the Marquis de la Fayette was about to return to France, he seized the occasion to engage the influence of that nobleman in the promotion of his favourite views. The first intelligence from Europe was far from being calculated to diminish the anxieties still felt in America by the enlightened friends of the revolution. In November the parliament of Great Britain reassembled. The speech from the throne breathed a settled purpose to continue the war; and the addresses from both houses, which were carried by large majorities, echoed the same sentiment. In the course of the animated debates which these addresses occasioned, an intention was indeed avowed by some members of the administration to change their system.

The plan indicated for the future was, to direct the whole force of the nation against France and Spain; and, until the strength of those powers should be broken, to suspend offensive operations in the interior of the United States. In the mean time, the posts at present occupied by their troops were to be maintained. This developement of the views of administration could only furnish additional motives to the American government for exerting all the faculties of the nation to expel the British garrisons from New York and Charlestown.

town. The efforts of the commander in chief to produce these exertions were earnest and unremitting, but not successful. The situation of the people, deprived of the advantages of commerce, was unfavourable to taxation; and they were not disposed to make those individual sacrifices which the public necessities required.

In no part of the union were the requisitions of Congress complied with. The state legislatures declared the inability of their constituents to pay taxes, and that they had already exerted themselves to the utmost. Instead of filling the continental treasury, some were devising means to draw money out of it: and some of those who passed bills imposing heavy taxes, directed the demands of the state first to be satisfied; after which, the residue was to be paid over to the continental receiver. By the unwearied attention and judicious arrangements of the minister of finance, the expences of the nation had been greatly reduced. The bank established in Philadelphia, and his own high character, had enabled him to support a system of credit, the advantages of which were incalculably great. He had, through the Chevalier de la Luzerne, obtained permission from his Most Christian Majesty to draw for half a million of livres * monthly, till six millions should be received. To prevent the diversion of any

* Rather more than fifty thousand dollars.

part of this sum from the most essential objects, he had concealed the negotiation even from Congress, and had only communicated it to the commander in chief; but when not more than the first instalment had been received, it was discovered that Doctor Franklin had anticipated the residue of the loan, and had already appropriated it to the purposes of the United States. At the commencement of the year 1782, not a dollar remained in the public treasury; and although Congress had required the payment of two millions on the 1st of April, not a cent had been received on the 23d of that month. Every reform which the most judicious and rigid œconomy could devise, had been introduced: yet the public expenditure remained too great to be defrayed without large contributions; and on the 1st of June, only about twenty thousand dollars, not much more than was required for the use of one day, had come into the national treasury. Yet to the financier every eye was turned; to him was stretched forth the empty hand of every public creditor; and against him, instead of the state authorities, were the complaints and imprecations of every unsatisfied claimant directed. In July, when the second quarterly payment of taxes ought to have been received, the minister of finance was informed, by some of his agents, that postponements of the collections of revenue had been made in some of the states, in consequence of which

which the month of December would arrive before any thing could be expected to come into the hands of the continental receivers. In a letter communicating this unpleasant intelligence to the commander in chief, he added, "With such gloomy prospects as this letter affords, I am tied here to be baited by continual clamorous demands; and for the forfeiture of all that is valuable in life, and which I hoped at this moment to enjoy, I am to be paid by invective. Scarce a day passes in which I am not tempted to give back into the hands of Congress the power they have delegated, and to lay down a burthen which presses me to the earth. Nothing prevents me but a knowledge of the difficulties I am obliged to struggle under. What may be the success of my efforts, God only knows; but to leave my post at present would, I know, be ruinous. This candid state of my situation and feelings I give to your bosom, because you, who have already felt and suffered so much, will be able to sympathise with me."

Fortunately for the United States, the temper of the British nation on the question of continuing the American war was not in unison with that of its sovereign. That war, into which the nation had entered with at least as much eagerness as the minister, had now become almost universally unpopular. Motions against the measures of administration respecting America were repeated by the opposition, and on every new experiment the

strength of the minority increased. At length, on the 27th of February, General Conway moved in the house of commons, "That it is the opinion of this house that a further prosecution of offensive war against America would, under present circumstances, be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies, and tend to increase the mutual enmity so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America." The whole force of administration was exerted to get rid of this question, but was exerted in vain, and the resolution was carried. An address to the king in the words of the motion was immediately voted, and was presented by the whole house. The answer of the crown being deemed inexplicit, it was on the 4th of March resolved by the commons, "That the house will consider as enemies to his majesty and the country, all those who should advise or attempt a further prosecution of offensive war on the continent of North America."

These votes were soon followed by a change of administration, and by conformable instructions to the commanding officers of his Britannic Majesty's forces in America.

While the commander in chief was employed in addressing circular letters to the state governments, suggesting all those motives which concurred to stimulate them to exertions better proportioned to the exigency of public affairs, English papers,

papers, containing the debates in parliament on the various propositions which had been made respecting America, reached the United States. Alarmed at the impression these debates might make, he introduced the opinions it was deemed prudent to inculcate respecting them into the letters he was then about to transmit to the governors of the several states. "I have perused these debates," said he, "with great attention and care; with a view, if possible, to penetrate their real design: and upon the most mature deliberation I can bestow, I am obliged to declare it as my candid opinion, that the measure, in all its views, so far as it respects America, is merely delusory; having no serious intention to admit our independance upon its true principles, but is calculated to produce a change of ministers to quiet the minds of their own people, and reconcile them to a continuance of the war, while it is meant to amuse this country with a false idea of peace, to draw us from our connection with France, and to lull us into a state of security and inactivity, which taking place, the ministry will be left to prosecute the war in other parts of the world with greater vigour and effect. Your Excellency will permit me on this occasion to observe, that even if the nation and parliament are really in earnest to obtain peace with America, it will undoubtedly be wisdom in us to meet them with great caution and circumspection, and by all means to keep our arms firm in our hands; and instead

instead of relaxing one iota in our exertions, rather to spring forward with redoubled vigour, that we may take the advantage of every favourable opportunity until our wishes are fully obtained. No nation yet suffered in treaty by preparing (even in the moment of negotiation) most vigorously for the field. The industry which the enemy are using to propagate their pacific reports, appears to me a circumstance very suspicious; and the eagerness with which the people, as I am informed, are catching at them, is, in my opinion, equally dangerous."

Early in May, Sir Guy Carleton, who had succeeded Sir Henry Clinton in the command of all the British forces in the United States, arrived at New York. Having been also appointed, in conjunction with Admiral Digby, a commissioner to negotiate a peace, he lost no time in conveying to General Washington copies of the votes of the British parliament, and of a bill which had been introduced on the part of administration, authorising his Majesty to conclude a peace or truce with those who were still denominated the revolted colonies of North America. These papers, he said, would manifest the dispositions prevailing with the government and people of England towards those of America; and if the like pacific temper should prevail in this country, both inclination and duty would lead him to meet it with the most zealous concurrence. He had addressed

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to Congress, he said, a letter containing the same communications, and he solicited from the American general a passport for the person who should convey it.

At this time, the bill enabling the British Monarch to conclude a peace or truce with America had not passed into a law; nor was any assurance given that the present commissioners possessed the power to offer other terms than those which had formerly been rejected. General Carleton therefore could not hope that negotiations would commence on such a basis; nor be disappointed that the passports he requested were refused by Congress, to whom the application was, of course, referred. The letter might have been written for the general purpose of conciliation, and of producing in the United States on the subject of hostilities a disposition corresponding with that which had been expressed in the House of Commons. But the situation of the United States justified a suspicion of different motives; and prudence required that their conduct should be influenced by that suspicion. The unwillingness with which the King would assent to the dismemberment of the empire, was understood; and it was thought not improbable that the sentiments expressed in the House of Commons might be attributable rather to the desire of changing those who had administered the government, than to any fixed determination to relinquish the design of re-

annexing

annexing America to the British crown. Under these impressions, the overtures now made were considered as opiates administered to lull into a state of fatal repose the spirit of vigilance which the guardians of the public safety laboured still to keep up, and to prevent those measures of security which it might yet be necessary to adopt. This jealousy was nourished by all the intelligence received from Europe. Either to avoid an acknowledgment of the independance of the United States, or to obtain a peace on terms more favourable than could be expected from a conjoint negotiation with all the powers engaged in the war, the utmost address of the British cabinet had been employed to detach her enemies from each other. The mediation of Russia had been accepted to procure a separate peace with Holland; propositions had been submitted both to France and Spain, tending to an accommodation of differences with those powers singly; and inquiries had been made of Mr. Adams, the American minister at the Hague, which seemed to contemplate the same object with regard to the United States. These political manœuvres were communicated to Congress, and the communication furnished additional motives for doubting the sincerity of the English cabinet. But whatever views might actuate the court of St. James on this subject, the resolution of the American government to enter into no separate treaty was unalterable. On this occasion, the several

states

states passed resolutions expressing their objections to separate negotiations, and declaring those to be enemies to America who should attempt to treat without the authority of Congress. But the public votes which have been stated, and probably the private instructions given to the British general, restrained him from offensive war, and the state of the American army disabled General Washington from making any attempt on the posts held by the enemy. The campaign of 1782 consequently passed away without furnishing any military operations of moment between the armies under the immediate direction of the respective commanders in chief. Early in August, a letter was received by General Washington from Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby, which, among other communications,* manifesting a pacific disposition on the part of England, contained the information that they had received official assurances that Mr. Grenville was at Paris, invested with full powers to treat with all the parties at war, and that negotiations for a general peace had already commenced. They further stated, that in order to remove all obstacles to a peace, his Majesty had commanded his ministers to direct Mr. Grenville, that the independance of the thirteen

* This letter gave intelligence of the liberation of Mr. Laurens, and that transports were prepared to convey American prisoners hitherto detained in England.

provinces

provinces should be proposed by him in the first instance, instead of being made a condition of a general treaty; but that this proposition would be made in the confidence that the loyalists would be restored to their possessions, or a full compensation allowed them for whatever confiscations might have taken place.

This letter was not long afterwards followed by one from Sir Guy Carleton, in which he declared that he could discern no further object of contest; and that he disapproved of all further hostilities both by sea and land, which could only tend to multiply the miseries of individuals, without a possible advantage to either nation. In pursuance of this opinion, he had, soon after his arrival in New York, restrained the practice of detaching parties of Indians against the frontiers of the United States, and had recalled those which were previously engaged in those bloody incursions. These communications appear to have alarmed the jealousy of the minister of France. To quiet his fears, the resolution was renewed, "that Congress would enter into no discussion of any overtures for pacification, but in confidence and in concert with his Most Christian Majesty." At the same time it was again recommended to the several states to adopt such measures as would most effectually guard against all intercourse with any subjects of the British crown during the war.

The inactivity which prevailed in the north,

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was in some measure communicated to the armies of the south.

On the 4th of January, General St. Clair reached the head quarters of General Greene, with the troops detached from York-town; but they had been so weakened by the casualties of a long march, that they did not much more than supply the places of those soldiers who were entitled to a discharge on the last day of December. Soon after receiving this reinforcement, General Wayne was detached with a part of the army over the Savannah river, for the purpose of protecting the state of Georgia. On his approach, the British troops in that state were concentred in the town of Savannah, where they were frequently insulted by Wayne. Some sharp skirmishes took place between them which terminated to the advantage of the Americans. But the evacuation of their posts being a necessary part of the plan for discontinuing offensive operations in America, the garrison was withdrawn from the town of Savannah on the 11th of July.

Charlestown was held until the 14th of December, although the intention of evacuating that place had been announced in the general orders of the 7th of August. Previous to that time, General Leslie had proposed a suspension of hostilities, to which General Greene did not think himself at liberty to accede. But no further military operations took place, than a few light skirmishes with foraging-

foraging-parties. Importance was given to one of these by the death of Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, whose loss was universally lamented. This gallant and accomplished young gentleman had entered at an early period of the war into the family of the commander in chief, and had always shared a large portion of his esteem and confidence. Brave to excess, he sought every occasion, in addition to those furnished by his station in the army, to render service to his country; and to acquire that military fame which he pursued with the ardour of a young soldier, whose courage seems to have partaken of that romantic spirit which youth and enthusiasm produce in a fearless mind. Nor was it in the camp alone he was fitted to shine. His education was liberal; and those who knew him state his manners to have been engaging, and his temper affectionate. In a highly-finished portrait of his character, drawn by Doctor Ramsay, he says, that "a dauntless bravery was the least of his virtues, and an excess of it his greatest foible."

The confidential duties to which he was called by General Washington, and the manner in which he performed them, speak in favour of his talents; and the important mission to France with which he was intrusted by Congress, attests the high opinion his country had formed of him, no less than the satisfactory manner in which he executed that mission, justifies the favour with which he was viewed.

Answering the letter of Greene which gave notice of his fate, General Washington said, "The death of Colonel Laurens I consider as a very heavy misfortune, not only to the public at large, but particularly to his family, and to all his private friends and connections, to whom his amiable and useful character had rendered him peculiarly dear."

No small addition to the regrets occasioned by the loss of this interesting young man, was derived from the reflection, that he fell unnecessarily, in an unimportant skirmish, in the last moments of the war, when exposing himself to the danger which proved fatal to him could no longer be useful to his country.

From the arrival of Sir Guy Carleton at New York, the conduct of the British armies on the American continent was regulated by the spirit then recently displayed in the House of Commons; and all the sentiments expressed by their general were pacific, and in a high degree conciliatory. But to these flattering appearances it was dangerous to yield implicit confidence. With a change of men, a change of measures might also take place; and in addition to the ordinary suggestions of prudence, the military events in the West Indies were well calculated to keep alive the attention, and to continue the anxieties, of the United States.

After the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, the arms of France and Spain in the American seas had been attended with signal success. Demarara

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and Esequibo on the continent, and the islands of St. Eustatius, St. Christopher's, Nevis, Montserrat, and the Bahamas, had been successively wrested from the possession of the English; and so formidable were both the land and naval forces kept up by the house of Bourbon in that quarter, that the hope of annihilating the power of Great Britain in the West Indies was far from appearing so extravagant as to be deemed a chimera.

Immense preparations had been made for the invasion of Jamaica; and early in April, Admiral Count de Grasse sailed from Martinique with a powerful fleet, having on board the land forces and artillery which were to be employed in the operations against that island. His intention was to form a junction with the Spanish Admiral Don Solano, who lay at Hispaniola; after which, the combined fleet, whose superiority promised to render it irresistible, was to proceed immediately on the important enterprise which had been concerted. On his way to Hispaniola, De Grasse was overtaken by Rodney, and brought to an engagement, in which he was totally defeated, and was himself made a prisoner. This decisive victory disconcerted the plans of the combined powers, and gave security to the British islands. In the United States it was feared that this alteration in the aspect of affairs might influence the deliberations of the English cabinet on the question of peace; and these apprehensions increased the uneasiness

easiness with which all intelligent men contemplated the state of the American finances.

The small and inadequate sums which were paid by the states, came so slowly into the hands of the minister of finance, that neither the military nor civil establishments could have been supported, had not the high reputation of that officer enabled him to make anticipations to a great extent; and had he not firmly resisted every temptation to divert the funds he could command, from the most essential objects to others which, though pressing heavily on him, were yet of minor importance. Almost every other expenditure yielded to the subsistence of the army; and it was with difficulty scarcely to be credited that money even for this purpose could be obtained.

So late as the month of August, not more than eighty thousand dollars had been received from all the states. In every department the utmost distress prevailed. To the bare subsistence of the army scarcely any thing could be added: to pay the troops was impossible.

To this circumstance the officers were rendered the more sensible by the arrival of the forces under the command of the Count de Rochambeau; who marched from Virginia late in the summer, and joined those of America on the North river about the middle of September.

It was then in contemplation to reduce the army, by which many of the officers would be discharged.

While

While the general declared in a confidential letter to the secretary of war, his conviction of the alacrity with which they would retire into private life, could they be placed in a situation as eligible as that they had left to enter into the service, he added: "Yet I cannot help fearing the result of the measure, when I see such a number of men goaded by a thousand stings of reflection on the past, and of anticipation on the future, about to be turned into the world; soured by penury, and what they call the ingratitude of the public; involved in debts, without one farthing of money to carry them home, after having spent the flower of their days, and many of them their patrimonies, in establishing the freedom and independance of their country, and having suffered every thing which human nature is capable of enduring on this side of death. I repeat it, when I reflect on these irritable circumstances, unattended by one thing to soothe their feelings, or brighten the gloomy prospect, I cannot avoid apprehending that a train of evils will follow of a very serious and distressing nature.

"I wish not to heighten the shades of the picture so far as the real life would justify me in doing, or I would give anecdotes of patriotism and distress which have scarcely ever been paralleled, never surpassed, in the history of mankind. But, you may rely upon it, the patience and long-sufferance of this army are almost exhausted, and there never was so great a spirit of discontent as at this instant.

"While in the field, I think it may be kept from breaking out into acts of outrage; but when we retire into winter quarters, unless the storm be previously dissipated, I cannot be at ease respecting the consequences. It is high time for a peace."

To judge rightly of the motives which produced this uneasy temper in the army, it will be necessary to recollect that the resolution of October 1780, granting half-pay for life to the officers, stood on the mere faith of a government possessing no funds which would enable it to perform its engagements. From requisitions alone to be made on sovereign states, were the supplies to be drawn which should satisfy these meritorious public creditors; and the ill success attending these requisitions while the dangers of war were still impending, furnished melancholy presages of their unproductiveness in time of peace. In addition to this reflection, of itself sufficient to disturb the tranquillity at first occasioned by this resolution, there were other considerations of decisive influence. The dispositions manifested by Congress were so unfriendly to the half-pay establishment, as to extinguish the hope that any funds they might acquire would be applied to that object. Since the passing of the resolution, the articles of confederation, which required the concurrence of nine states to any act appropriating public money, had been adopted; and nine states had never been in favour of the measure.

Should the requisitions of Congress therefore be respected, or should permanent funds be granted by the states, the prevailing sentiment of the nation was too hostile to the compensation which had been stipulated, to leave a probability that it would be substantially made. This was not merely the sentiment of the individuals then administering the government, which might change with a change of men. It was known to be the sense of the states they represented; and consequently, the hope could not be indulged that on this subject a future Congress would be more just, or would think more liberally. As therefore the establishment of that independance for which they had fought and suffered appeared to become more certain—as the end of their toils approached—the officers became more attentive to their own situation; and the inquietude of the army increased with the progress of the negotiation. In October the French troops marched to Boston, in order to embark for the West Indies; and the Americans retired into winter quarters. The apparent indisposition of the British general to act offensively, the pacific temper avowed by the cabinet of London, and the strength of the country in which the American troops were cantoned, gave ample assurance that no military operations would be undertaken during the winter, which could require the continuance of General Washington in camp: but the irritable temper of the army furnished cause for

for serious apprehension, and he determined to forego every gratification to be derived from a suspension of his toils, in order to watch its discontents. While the situation of the United States thus loudly called for peace, the negotiations in Europe were protracted by causes which in America were almost unknown, and which it would have been dangerous to declare. Although, so far as respected the dismemberment of the British empire, the war had been carried on with one common design, the ulterior views of the belligerent powers were not only different, but in some respects were incompatible with each other.

To depress a proud and hated rival was so peculiarly desirable to the house of Bourbon, that France and Spain might be disposed to continue hostilities for the attainment of objects in which America could feel no common interest. This circumstance of itself furnished motives for prolonging the war after the causes in which it originated were removed; and additional delays were produced by the discordant views which were entertained in regard to those claims which were the subjects of negotiation. These were, the boundaries which should be assigned to the United States, and the participation which should be allowed them in the fisheries. On both these points, the wishes of France and Spain were opposed to those of America; and the cabinets both of Versailles and Madrid seemed disposed to intrigue with that

of London to prevent such ample concessions respecting them, as the British minister might be inclined to make. After an intricate negotiation, in which the penetration, judgment, and firmness, of the American commissioners were eminently displayed, eventual and preliminary articles were signed on the 30th of November. By this treaty every reasonable wish of America, especially on the questions of the fisheries and of boundaries, was gratified. The liberality of the articles on these points attests the success which attended the endeavours of the plenipotentiaries on the part of the United States, to prove that the real interests of England required that America should become independant in fact as well as name, and that every cause of future discord between the two nations should be removed. On the part of the United States, it was stipulated that creditors should be permitted to recover their debts; that Congress would recommend the restoration of the estates of real British subjects which had been confiscated during the war, and that no future confiscations should be made. The effect of this treaty was suspended till peace should be concluded between France and Great Britain. The connections between his Most Christian and Most Catholic Majesty not admitting of a separate peace on the part of either, the negotiations between the belligerent powers of Europe had been protracted by the perseverance with which Spain persisted

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in her endeavours to obtain the cession of Gibraltar. At length, the formidable armament which had invested that fortress was repulsed with immense slaughter; after which, the place was relieved by Lord Howe, and the besiegers in despair abandoned the enterprize. Negotiations were then taken up with sincerity; and preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain, were signed on the 20th of January 1783.

In America, the approach of peace, combined with other causes, produced a state of things highly interesting and critical. There was much reason to fear that Congress possessed neither the power nor the inclination to comply with its engagements to the army; and the officers who had wasted their fortunes and their prime of life in unrewarded service, could not look with unconcern at the prospect which was opening to them. In December, soon after going into winter quarters, they presented a petition to Congress respecting the money actually due to them; and a commutation of the half-pay stipulated by the resolutions of October 1780, for a sum in gross, which they flattered themselves would be less objectionable than the half-pay establishment. Some security that the engagements of the government would be complied with, was also requested.

A committee of officers were deputed to solicit the attention of Congress to this memorial, and to attend its progress through the house.

Among

Among the most distinguished members of the federal legislature were persons sincerely disposed to do ample justice to the public creditors generally, and to that class of them in particular whose claims were founded in military service. But there were many who viewed the army with a jealous eye, who acknowledged their merits with unwillingness, and involuntarily betrayed their repugnance to a faithful observance of the public engagements. With this question was connected one of equal importance, on which Congress was divided almost in the same manner. One party was attached to state, the other to continental, politics. The latter laboured to fund the public debts on solid continental securities, while the former opposed their whole weight to measures calculated to effect that object. In the last party were to be found the best talents and the most discerning patriotism of America; but the system of government opposed to their views obstacles not to be surmounted. In consequence of these divisions on the most interesting points, the business of the army advanced slowly; and the important question respecting the commutation of their half-pay remained undecided in March, when intelligence was received of the signature of the preliminary and eventual articles of peace between the United States and Great Britain.

Soured by their past sufferings, their present wants, and their gloomy prospects; and exasperated

rated by the neglect with which they believed themselves to be treated, and by the injustice supposed to be meditated against them; the ill temper of the army was almost universal, and seemed to require only a slight impulse to give it activity. To render this temper the more dangerous, an opinion had been insinuated, that the commander in chief was restrained by extreme delicacy from advocating their interests with that zeal which his feelings and knowledge of their situation had inspired. Early in March, a letter was received from their committee in Philadelphia, purporting that the objects they solicited had not been obtained. On the 10th of that month, an anonymous paper was circulated, requiring a meeting of the general and field officers at the public building on the succeeding day at eleven in the morning. It was also announced, that an officer from each company, and a delegate from the medical staff, would be expected. The object of the convention was to be, "to consider the late letter from their representatives in Philadelphia, and what measures (if any) should be adopted to obtain that redress of grievances which they seemed to have solicited in vain." On the same day was privately circulated an address to the army, admirably well prepared to work on the passions of the moment, and to conduct them to the most desperate resolutions. Full justice cannot be done to this address without inserting it entire.

" To the Officers of the Army.

" GENTLEMEN,

" A fellow-soldier, whose interests and affections bind him strongly to you, whose past sufferings have been as great, and whose future fortune may be as desperate, as yours, would beg leave to address you. Age has its claims, and rank is not without its pretensions to advise; but, though unsupported by both, he flatters himself that the plain language of sincerity and experience will neither be unheard nor unregarded.

" Like many of you, he loved private life, and left it with regret. He left it, determined to retire from the field, with the necessity that called him to it, and not till then—not till the enemies of his country, the slaves of power, and the hirelings of injustice, were compelled to abandon their schemes, and acknowledge America as terrible in arms as she had been humble in remonstrance. With this object in view, he has long shared in your toils, and mingled in your dangers. He has felt the cold hand of poverty without a murmur, and has seen the insolence of wealth without a sigh. But, too much under the direction of his wishes, and sometimes weak enough to mistake desire for opinion, he has till lately, very lately, believed in the justice of his country. He hoped, that as the clouds of adversity scattered, and as the sunshine of peace and better fortune broke in upon us, the coldness and severity of government would relax, and that more than justice, that gratitude, would blaze forth upon those hands which had upheld her in the darkest stages of her passage from impending servitude to acknowledged independence. But faith has its limits as well as temper, and there are points beyond which neither can be stretched without sinking into cowardice, or plunging into credulity.

dulity. This, my friends, I conceive to be your situation. Hurried to the very verge of both, another step would ruin you for ever. To be tame and unprovoked when injuries press hard upon you, is more than weakness; but to look up for kinder usage, without one manly effort of your own, would fix your character, and shew the world how richly you deserve those chains you broke. To guard against this evil, let us take a review of the ground upon which we now stand, and from thence carry our thoughts forward for a moment into the unexplored field of expedient. After a pursuit of seven long years, the object for which we set out is at length brought within our reach. Yes, my friends, that suffering courage of yours was active once—it has conducted the United States of America through a doubtful and a bloody war. It has placed her in the chair of independance, and peace returns again to bless whom? A country willing to redress your wrongs, cherish your worth, and reward your services? A country courting your return to private life with tears of gratitude and smiles of admiration; longing to divide with you that independancy which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved? Is this the case? or is it rather a country that tramples upon your rights, disdain yours cries, and insults your distresses? Have you not more than once suggested your wishes, and made known your wants to Congress? wants and wishes which gratitude and policy should have anticipated rather than evaded. And have you not lately, in the meek language of entreating memorials, begged from their justice what you could no longer expect from their favour? How have you been answered? Let the letter which you are called to consider to-morrow reply.

"If

"If this, then, be your treatment while the swords you wear are necessary for the defence of America, what have you to expect from peace, when your voice shall sink, and your strength dissipate by division; when those very swords, the instruments and companions of your glory, shall be taken from your sides, and no remaining mark of military distinction left but your wants, infirmities and scars? Can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution; and, retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness, and contempt? Can you consent to wade through the vile mire of dependancy, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honour? If you can, go, and carry with you the jest of tories, and the scorn of whigs; the ridicule, and what is worse, the pity of the world. Go, starve and be forgotten! But if your spirit should revolt at this; if you have sense enough to discover, and spirit enough to oppose tyranny, under whatever garb it may assume; whether it be the plain coat of republicanism, or the splendid robe of royalty; if you have yet learned to discriminate between a people and a cause, between men and principles; awake, attend to your situation, and redress yourselves. If the present moment be lost, every future effort is in vain; and your threats then will be as empty as your entreaties now.

"I would advise you, therefore, to come to some final opinion upon what you can bear, and what you will suffer. If your determination be in any proportion to your wrongs, carry your appeal from the justice, to the fears, of government. Change the milk-and-water style of your last memorial; assume a bolder tone; decent, but lively, spirited, and determined; and suspect the man who would advise to more moderation and

longer

longer forbearance. Let two or three men, who can feel as well as write, be appointed to draw up your last *remonstrance*; for I would no longer give it the suing, soft, unsuccessful epithet of *memorial*. Let it be represented, in language that will neither dishonour you by its rudeness, nor betray you by its fears, what has been promised by Congress, and what has been performed: how long and how patiently you have suffered: how little you have asked, and how much of that little has been denied. Tell them that, though you were the first, and would wish to be the last, to encounter danger, though despair itself can never drive you into dishonour, it may drive you from the field: that the wound often irritated, and never healed, may at length become incurable; and that the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now, must operate like the grave, and part you for ever. That, in any political event, the army has its alternative. If peace, that nothing shall separate you from your arms but death: if war, that courting the auspices, and inviting the directions, of your illustrious leader, you will retire to some unsettled country, smile in your turn, and 'mock when their fear cometh on.' But let it represent also, that should they comply with the request of your late memorial, it would make you more happy, and them more respectable. That while war should continue, you would follow their standard into the field; and when it came to an end, you would withdraw into the shade of private life, and give the world another subject of wonder and applause—an army victorious over its enemies, victorious over itself."

Persuaded as the officers in general were of the indisposition of government to remunerate their services, this eloquent and passionate address, dictated

tated by genius and by feeling, found in almost every bosom a kindred though latent sentiment, prepared to receive its impression. Like the train to which a torch is applied, the passions quickly caught its flame, and nothing seemed to be required but the assemblage invited on the succeeding day to communicate the conflagration to the combustible mass, and to produce an explosion alike tremendous and ruinous. Fortunately the commander in chief was in camp. His characteristic firmness and decision did not forsake him in this crisis. The occasion required that his measures should be firm, but prudent and conciliatory; evincing his fixed determination to oppose any rash proceedings, but calculated to assuage the irritation which was excited, and to restore a confidence in government.

This course he at once adopted. Knowing well that it was much easier to avoid intemperate measures, than to correct them, he thought it of essential importance to prevent the immediate meeting of the officers; but knowing also that a sense of injury and fear of injustice had made a deep impression on them, and that their sensibilities were all alive to the proceedings of Congress on their memorial, he thought it more advisable to guide than to discountenance their deliberations on that interesting subject. With these views, he noticed in his orders the anonymous paper proposing a meeting of the officers, and expressed the conviction

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he felt that their good sense would secure them from paying any "attention to such an irregular invitation; but his own duty," he conceived, "as well as the reputation and true interest of the army, required his disapprobation of such disorderly proceedings. At the same time he requested the general and field officers, with one officer from each company, and a proper representative from the staff of the army, to assemble at twelve on Saturday the 15th, at the New Building, to hear the report of the committee deputed by the army to Congress. After mature deliberation, they will devise what further measures ought to be adopted as most rational, and best calculated to obtain the just and important object in view." The senior officer in rank, present, was directed to preside, and to report the result of the deliberations to the commander in chief. The day succeeding that on which these orders were published, a second anonymous address appeared from the same pen which had written the former.

Acquainted with the discontents of the army, its author did not despair of impelling the officers to the desired point. Affecting to consider the orders in a light favourable to his views, he said: "Till now, the commander in chief has regarded the steps you have taken for redress with good wishes alone. His ostensible silence has authorized your meetings, and his private opinion has sanctified your claims. Had he disliked the object in view, would

would not the same sense of duty which forbade you from meeting on the third day of the week, have forbidden you from meeting on the seventh? is not the same subject held up for your discussion? and has it not passed the seal of office, and taken all the solemnity of an order? This will give system to your proceedings, and stability to your resolves. It will ripen speculation into fact; and while it adds to the unanimity, it cannot possibly lessen the independance, of your sentiments. It may be necessary to add upon this subject, that from the injunction with which the general orders close, every man is at liberty to conclude that the report to be made to head-quarters is intended for Congress. Hence will arise another motive for that energy which has been recommended: for can you give the lie to the pathetic descriptions of your representations, and the more alarming predictions of your friends?"

But, incapable of acting on motives not to be avowed, Washington would not permit himself to be misunderstood. The interval between his orders and the general meeting they invited, was employed in impressing on those officers individually who possessed the greatest share of the general confidence, a just sense of what the exigency required; and the whole weight of his influence was exerted to bring the agitations of the moment to a happy termination. This was a work of no inconsiderable difficulty. So convinced were many

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that government designed to deal unfairly by them, that only the reliance they placed on their general, and their attachment to him, could have moderated their resentments so far as to induce them to adopt the measures he recommended.

On the 15th the convention of officers assembled, and General Gates * took the chair. The commander in chief then addressed them in the following terms:

"GENTLEMEN,

"By an anonymous summons an attempt has been made to convene you together; how inconsistent with the rules of propriety, how unmilitary, and how subversive of all order and discipline, let the good sense of the army decide. In the moment of this summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation, addressed more to the feelings and passions than to the judgment of the army. The author of the piece is entitled to much credit for the goodness of his pen: and I could wish he had as much credit for the rectitude of his heart: for, as men see through different optics, and are induced by the reflecting faculties of the mind to use different means to attain the same end, the author of the address should have had more charity than to mark for suspicion the man who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance; or, in other words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises.

"But he had another plan in view, in which candour and liberality of sentiment, regard to justice and love of country, have no part: and he was right to insinuate

* By a resolution of the preceding year, the enquiry into his conduct had been dispensed with, and he had been restored to his command in the army.

the darkest suspicion to effect the blackest design. That the address was drawn with great art, and is designed to answer the most insidious purposes; that it is calculated to impress the mind with an idea of premeditated injustice in the sovereign power of the United States, and rouse all the resentments which must unavoidably flow from such a belief; that the secret mover of this scheme, whoever he may be, intended to take advantage of the passions, while they were warmed by the recollection of past distresses, without giving time for cool, deliberative thinking, and that composure of mind which is so necessary to give dignity and stability to measures; is rendered too obvious, by the mode of conducting the business, to need other proofs than a reference to the proceedings.

"Thus much, gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me to observe to you, to shew upon what principles I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting which was proposed to have been held on Tuesday last, and not because I wanted a disposition to give you every opportunity, consistent with your own honour, and the dignity of the army, to make known your grievances. If my conduct therefore has not evinced to you that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing and improper. But, as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common country; as I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty; as I have been the constant companion and witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel and acknowledge your merits; as I have ever considered my own military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army; as my heart has ever expanded with joy when I have heard its praises, and

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my indignation has arisen when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it; it can scarcely be supposed at this stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests. But how are they to be promoted? The way is plain, says the anonymous addresser! If war continues, remove into the unsettled country; there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful country to defend itself! But who are they to defend? our wives, our children, our farms, and other property which we leave behind us? or, in this state of hostile separation, are we to take the two first, (the latter cannot be removed,) to perish in a wilderness, with hunger, cold, and nakedness?

"If peace takes place, never sheath your swords, says he, until you have obtained full and ample justice. This dreadful alternative of either deserting our country in the extremest hour of her distress, or turning our arms against it, which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance, has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea. My God! what can this writer have in view, by recommending such measures? Can he be a friend to the army? Can he be a friend to this country? Rather is he not an insidious foe; some emissary, perhaps, from New York, plotting the ruin of both, by sowing the seeds of discord and separation between the civil and military powers of the continent? And what a compliment does he pay to our understandings, when he recommends measures, in either alternative, impracticable in their nature?

"But here, gentlemen, I will drop the curtain, because it would be as imprudent in me to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception to suppose you stood in need of them. A

moment's reflection will convince every dispassionate mind of the physical impossibility of carrying either proposal into execution. There might, gentlemen, be an impropriety in my taking notice, in this address to you, of an anonymous production; but the manner in which that performance has been introduced to the army, the effect it was intended to have, together with some other circumstances, will amply justify my observation on the tendency of that writing.

"With respect to the advice given by the author, to suspect the man who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance, I spurn it, as every man who regards that liberty and reveres that justice for which we contend, undoubtedly must; for, if men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments on a matter which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences that can invite the consideration of mankind, reason is of no use to us. The freedom of speech may be taken away, and dumb and silent we may be led like sheep to the slaughter. I cannot in justice to my own belief, and what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this address, without giving it as my decided opinion, that that honourable body entertain exalted sentiments of the services of the army, and, from a full conviction of its merits and sufferings, will do it complete justice. That their endeavours to discover and establish funds for this purpose have been unwearied, and will not cease till they have succeeded, I have not a doubt. But, like all other large bodies, where there is a variety of different interests to reconcile, their determinations are slow. Why then should we distrust them; and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures which may cast a shade over that glory which has been so justly

justly acquired, and tarnish the reputation of an army w[illegible] celebrated through all Europe for its fortitude a[illegible]sm? And for what is this done? To bring th[illegible]ject we seek nearer? No; most certainly, in my o[illegible]n, it will cast it at a greater distance. For myself, (and I take no merit in giving the assurance, being induced to it from principles of gratitude, veracity, and justice, and a grateful sense of the confidence you have ever placed in me,) a recollection of the cheerful assistance and prompt obedience I have experienced from you, under every vicissitude of fortune, and the sincere affection I feel for an army I have so long had the honour to command, will oblige me to declare in this public and solemn manner, that in the attainment of complete justice for all your toils and dangers, and in the gratification of every wish, so far as may be done consistently with the great duty I owe my country, and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my services to the utmost extent of my abilities.

"While I give you these assurances, and pledge myself in the most unequivocal manner to exert whatever abilities I am possessed of in your favour, let me entreat you, gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and sully the glory, you have hitherto maintained. Let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress; that, previous to your dissolution as an army, they will cause all your accounts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in the resolutions which were published to you two days ago; and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power to render ample justice to you for your faithful

and meritorious services. And let me conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honour, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country; and who wickedly attempts to open the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood.

"By thus determining, and thus acting, you will pursue the plain and direct road to the attainment of your wishes; you will defeat the insidious designs of our enemies, who are compelled to resort from open force to secret artifice. You will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; and you will, by the dignity of your conduct, afford occasion for posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, Had this day been wanting, the world had never seen the last stage of perfection to which human nature is capable of attaining."

These sentiments from a person whom they had been accustomed to love, to reverence, and to obey; the solidity of whose judgment, and the sincerity of whose zeal for their interests, were alike unquestionable; could not fail to be irresistible. No person was hardy enough to oppose the advice he had given; and the impression made was general and apparent. A resolution moved by general Knox, and seconded by Brigadier-general Putnam, "assuring him that the offi-

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cers returned his affectionate expressions with the greatest sincerity of which the human heart is capable," was unanimously voted. On the motion of General Putnam, a committee, consisting of General Knox, Colonel Brookes, and Captain Howard, was then appointed to prepare resolutions on the business before them, and to report in half an hour. The report of the committee being brought in and fully considered, the following resolutions were passed unanimously.

"Resolved unanimously, That at the commencement of the present war the officers of the American army engaged in the service of their country, from the purest love and attachment to the rights and liberties of human nature, which motives still exist in the highest degree; and that no circumstance of distress or danger shall induce a conduct that may tend to sully the reputation and glory which they have acquired, at the price of their blood and eight years' faithful services.

"Resolved unanimously, That the army continue to have an unshaken confidence in the justice of Congress and their country, and are fully convinced that the representatives of America will not disband or disperse the army until their accounts are liquidated, the balances accurately ascertained, and adequate funds established for payment; and in this arrangement, the officers expect that the half-pay, or a commutation for it, should be efficaciously comprehended.

"Resolved unanimously, That his excellency the commander in chief be requested to write to his excellency the president of Congress, earnestly entreating the most speedy decision of that honourable body upon the

the subject of our late address, which was forwarded by a committee of the army, some of whom are waiting upon Congress for the result. In the alternative of peace or war, this event would be highly satisfactory; and would produce immediate tranquility in the minds of the army, and prevent any further machinations of designing men to sow discord between the civil and military powers of the United States.

"On motion, resolved unanimously, That the officers of the American army view with abhorrence, and reject with disdain, the infamous propositions contained in a late anonymous address to the officers of the army, and resent with indignation the secret attempts of some unknown persons to collect the officers together, in a manner totally subversive of all discipline and good order.

"Resolved unanimously, that the thanks of the officers of the army be given to the committee who presented to Congress the late address of the army, for the wisdom and prudence with which they have conducted that business: and that a copy of the proceedings of this day be transmitted by the president to Major-general M'Dougall; and that he be requested to continue his solicitations at Congress, until the objects of his mission are accomplished."

The storm which had so suddenly and unexpectedly been raised being thus happily dissipated, the commander in chief exerted all his influence in support of the application the officers had made to Congress. The letter written by him on the occasion will shew that he was not impelled to this measure by the engagements he had entered into more strongly than by his feelings.

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"The result of the proceedings of the grand convention of the officers, which I have the honour of enclosing to your excellency, for the inspection of Congress, will, I flatter myself, be considered as the last glorious proof of patriotism which could have been given by men who aspired to the distinction of a patriot army, and will not only confirm their claim to the justice, but will increase their title to the gratitude, of their country.

"Having seen the proceedings on the part of the army terminate with perfect unanimity, and in a manner entirely consonant to my wishes; being impressed with the liveliest sentiments of affection for those who have so long, so patiently, and so cheerfully, suffered and fought under my immediate direction; having, from motives of justice, duty, and gratitude, spontaneously offered myself as an advocate for their rights; and having been requested to write to your excellency, earnestly entreating the most speedy decision of Congress upon the subjects of the late address from the army to that honourable body; it now only remains for me to perform the task I have assumed, and to intercede in their behalf, as I now do, that the sovereign power will be pleased to verify the predictions I have pronounced of, and the confidence the army have reposed in, the justice of their country.

"And here I humbly conceive it is altogether unnecessary (while I am pleading the cause of an army which have done and suffered more than any other army ever did in the defence of the rights and liberties of human nature) to expatiate on their claims to the most ample compensation for their meritorious services; because they are perfectly known to the whole world, and because (although the topics are inexhaustible) enough has already been said on the subject. To prove these assertions,

assertions, to evince that my sentiments have ever been uniform, and to shew what my ideas of the rewards in question have always been, I appeal to the archives of Congress, and call on those sacred deposits to witness for me. And in order that my observations and arguments in favour of a future adequate provision for the officers of the army may be brought to remembrance again, and considered in a single point of view, without giving Congress the trouble of having recourse to their files, I will beg leave to transmit herewith an extract from a representation made by me to a committee of Congress, so long ago as the 20th of January 1778, and also the transcript of a letter to the president of Congress, dated near Passaic Falls, October 11, 1780.

"That in the critical and perilous moment when the lastmentioned communication was made, there was the utmost danger a dissolution of the army would have taken place, unless measures similar to those recommended had been adopted, will not admit of a doubt. That the adoption of the resolution granting half-pay for life has been attended with all the happy consequences I had foretold, so far as respected the good of the service, let the astonishing contrast between the state of the army at this instant and at the former period determine. And that the establishment of funds, and security of the payment of all the just demands of the army, will be the most certain means of preserving the national faith and future tranquillity of this extensive continent, is my decided opinion.

"By the preceding remarks it will be readily imagined, that instead of retracting and reprehending (from farther experience and reflection), the mode of compensation so strenuously urged in the enclosures, I am more and more confirmed in the sentiment; and if in the

the wrong, suffer me to please myself in the grateful delusion. For if, besides the simple payment of their wages, a further compensation is not due to the sufferings and sacrifices of the officers, then have I been mistaken indeed. If the whole army have not merited whatever a grateful people can bestow, then have I been beguiled by prejudice, and built opinion on the basis of error. If this country should not in the event perform every thing which has been requested in the late memorial to Congress, then will my belief become vain, and the hope that has been excited void of foundation. And if (as has been suggested for the purpose of inflaming their passions) the officers of the army 'are to be the only sufferers by this revolution; if, retiring from the field, they are to grow old in poverty, wretchedness, and contempt; if they are to wade through the vile mire of dependancy, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honour;' then shall I have learned what ingratitude is; then shall I have realized a tale which will embitter every moment of my future life.

"But I am under no such apprehensions: a country rescued by their arms from impending ruin, will never leave unpaid the debt of gratitude.

"Should any intemperate and improper warmth have mingled itself among the foregoing observations, I must entreat your excellency and Congress that it may be attributed to the effusions of an honest zeal in the best of causes, and that my peculiar situation may be my apology; and I hope I need not on this momentous occasion make any new protestations of disinterestedness, having ever renounced for myself the idea of pecuniary reward. The consciousness of having attempted faithfully to discharge my duty, and the approbation of my country, will be a sufficient recompence for my services. "I have the honour to be," &c.

These proceedings of the army produced a concurrence of nine states in favour of a resolution commuting the half-pay into a sum in gross equal to five years full pay.

But the value of this resolution depended on the success of requisitions, and of applications to the respective states to place permanent funds in the power of Congress.

The treaty between the United States and Great Britain being eventual, it furnished no security against a continuance of the calamities of war, and the most serious fears were entertained that the difficulties opposed to a general pacification would not be removed. On the 24th of March these fears were entirely dispelled by a letter from the Marquis de la Fayette, announcing a general peace. This intelligence, though not official, was certain; and orders were immediately issued recalling all armed vessels cruising under the authority of the United States. Early in April the copy of a declaration, published in Paris, and signed by the American commissioners, notifying the exchange of ratifications of the preliminary articles between Great Britain and France, was received; and on the 19th of that month the cessation* of hostilities was proclaimed.

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* The following is an extract from the orders of the preceding day:—"The commander in chief orders the cessation of hostilities between the United States of America and the King

The attention of Congress might now safely be turned to the reduction of the continental army.

King of Great Britain to be publicly proclaimed to-morrow at twelve o'clock at the New Building, and that the proclamation which will be communicated herewith be read to-morrow evening at the head of every regiment and corps of the army; after which the chaplains, with the several brigades, will render thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies, particularly for his over-ruling the wrath of man to his own glory, and causing the rage of war to cease among the nations. Although the proclamation before alluded to extends only to the prohibition of hostilities, and not to the annunciation of a general peace, yet it must afford the most rational and sincere satisfaction to every benevolent mind, as it puts a period to a long and doubtful contest, stops the effusion of human blood, opens the prospect to a more splendid scene, and, like another morning star, promises the approach of a brighter day than hath hitherto illuminated the western hemisphere. On such a happy day, which is the harbinger of peace, a day which completes the eighth year of the war, it would be ingratitude not to rejoice, it would be insensibility not to participate in the general felicity.

" The commander in chief, far from endeavouring to stifle the feelings of joy in his own bosom, offers his most cordial congratulations on the occasion to all the officers of every denomination, to all the troops of the United States in general, and in particular to those gallant and persevering men who had resolved to defend the rights of their invaded country so long as the war should continue. For these are the men who ought to be considered as the pride and boast of the American army; and who, crowned with well-earned laurels, may soon withdraw from the field of glory to the more tranquil walks of civil life.

" While the general recollects the almost infinite variety of scenes

This was a critical operation, and in the present state of the funds by no means exempt from dan-

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scenes through which we have passed, with a mixture of pleasure, astonishment, and gratitude; while he contemplates the prospect before us with rapture, he cannot help wishing that all the brave men (of whatever condition they may be) who have shared in the toils and dangers of effecting this glorious revolution, of rescuing millions from the hand of oppression, and of laying the foundation of a great empire, might be impressed with a proper idea of the dignified part they have been called to act (under the smiles of Providence) on the stage of human affairs: for happy, thrice happy, shall they be pronounced hereafter, who have contributed any thing, who have performed the meanest office, in erecting this stupendous *fabric* of *freedom* and empire on the broad basis of independancy; who have assisted in protecting the rights of human nature, and establishing an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions. The glorious task for which we first flew to arms being thus accomplished, the liberties of our country being fully acknowledged, and firmly secured by the smiles of Heaven, on the purity of our cause, and the honest exertions of a feeble people, determined to be free, against a powerful nation disposed to oppress them; and the character of those who have persevered through every extremity of hardship, suffering, and danger, being immortalised by the illustrious appellation of the *patriot army*; nothing now remains but for the actors of this mighty scene to preserve a perfect unvarying consistency of character through the very last act, to close the drama with applause, and to retire from the military theatre with the same approbation of angels and men which has crowned all their former virtuous actions. For this purpose, no disorder or licentiousness must be tolerated; every considerate and well-disposed soldier must remember it will be absolutely necessary to wait with patience until peace shall

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ger. Independent of the anxieties which the officers would naturally feel respecting their future provision, which of necessity remained unsecured, large arrears of pay were due to them, the immediate receipt of part of which was necessary to supply the most urgent wants. To disband an army to which the government was greatly indebted, without furnishing the means of conveying the individuals who composed it to their respective homes, could scarcely be undertaken; and Congress was unable to advance the pay of a single month. Although, for the year 1782, eight millions had been required, the payments made into the public treasury under that requisition had amounted to only 420,031$\frac{2}{90}$ dollars, and the foreign loans had not been sufficient to defray expences it was impossible to avoid. At the close of that year, the expenditures of the superintendant of the finances had exceeded his receipts by

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be declared, or Congress shall be enabled to take proper measures for the security of the public stores, &c. As soon as these arrangements shall be made, the general is confident there will be no delay in discharging, with every mark of distinction and honour, all the men enlisted for the war, who will then have faithfully performed their engagements with the public. The general has already interested himself in their behalf, and he thinks he need not repeat the assurances of his disposition to be useful to them on the present and every other proper occasion. In the mean time, he is determined that no military neglects or excesses shall go unpunished while he retains the command of the army."

404,713

404,713$\frac{9}{90}$ dollars, and the excess continued to increase.*

Although it was deemed a necessary precaution to declare that the troops entered for the war should not be considered as entitled to a discharge till the definitive treaty of peace should be signed, the commander in chief was instructed to grant furloughs to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers of this description, who were not required to rejoin their regiments. By this prudent measure, it was intended to diminish the hazard of disbanding an unpaid army. Congress urged the states to comply so far with the requisitions as to enable the superintendant of the finances to advance a part of the arrears due to the soldiers; but as the foreign danger diminished, they became still less attentive to these demands; and the financier was under the necessity of making further anticipations of the revenue. Measures were taken to advance three months pay in his notes; but before they could be prepared, the orders were issued for complying with the resolution of Congress for granting furloughs. These orders produced a serious alarm. The generals and other officers commanding regiments and corps cantoned on the Hudson assembled, and presented an address to

* It appears from the account transmitted to the respective states, that on the 30th of June 1783, the minister of finance had expended the astonishing sum of 1,074,153$\frac{61}{90}$ dollars beyond his receipts.

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the commander in chief, in which the most ardent affection to his person, and confidence in his attachment to the interests of the army, were mingled with expressions of profound duty and respect for the government. But they declared, that after the late explanations on their claims, they had confidently expected that their accounts would be liquidated, the balances ascertained, and adequate funds for the payment of those balances provided, before they should be dispersed or disbanded.

Bound to the army by the strongest ties of affection and of gratitude, intimately convinced of the justice of their claims, and of the patriotic principles by which they were influenced, the general was induced by sentiment, not less than by prudence, to regard their application. On the succeeding day he returned an answer, in which, after declaring, "that as no man could possibly be better acquainted than himself with the past merits and services of the army, so no one could be more strongly impressed with their present ineligible situation, feel a keener sensibility at their distresses, or more ardently desire to alleviate or remove them;" he added: "Although the officers of the army very well know my official situation, that I am only a servant of the public, and that it is not for me to dispense with orders which it is my duty to carry into execution; yet, as furloughs in all services are considered as a matter of indulgence, and not of compulsion; as Congress,

gress, I am persuaded, entertain the best disposition towards the army; and as, I apprehend, in a very short time the two principal articles of complaint will be removed; until the further pleasure of Congress can be known, I shall not hesitate to comply with the wishes of the army, under these reservations only: that officers sufficient to conduct the men who choose to receive furloughs will attend them, either on furlough, or by detachment."

With this answer the officers were completely satisfied. The utmost good temper was universally manifested, and the arrangements for retiring on furlough were made without a murmur. In the course of the summer, a considerable proportion of the troops enlisted for three years were also permitted to return to their homes: and in October a proclamation was issued by Congress, declaring all those who had engaged for the war to be discharged on the 3d of December.

While these excellent dispositions were manifested by the veterans serving under the immediate eye of their patriot chief, the government was exposed to insult and outrage from the mutinous spirit of a small party of the new levies. About eighty of this description of troops belonging to the state of Pennsylvania, were stationed at Lancaster. Revolting against the authority of their officers, they marched in a body to Philadelphia, with the avowed purpose of obtaining a redress

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of their grievances from the executive council of the state.

The march of these insolent mutineers was unobstructed; and, after arriving in Philadelphia, they were joined by some other troops quartered in the barracks, so as to amount to about three hundred men.

They then marched in military parade, with fixed bayonets, to the state-house, where Congress and the executive council of the state were sitting. After placing sentinels at all the doors, they sent in a written message, threatening the president and council of the state to let loose an enraged soldiery upon them, if their demands were not gratified in twenty minutes. Although the resentments of this banditti were not directed particularly against Congress, the government of the union was grossly insulted, and those who administered it were blockaded for several hours by an insolent and licentious soldiery. After remaining in this situation about three hours, Congress separated, having fixed on Princeton as the place at which they should reassemble. On receiving information of this outrage, the commander in chief instantly detached fifteen hundred men, under the command of Major-general Howe, to suppress the mutiny. The indignation which this insult to the civil authority had occasioned, and the mortification with which he viewed the misconduct of any portion of the American troops, were strongly

marked in his letter written on that occasion to the president of Congress.

" While," said he, " I suffer the most poignant distress in observing that a handful of men, contemptible in numbers, and equally so in point of service, if the veteran troops from the southward have not been seduced by their example, and who are not worthy to be called soldiers, should disgrace themselves and their country as the Pennsylvania mutineers have done, by insulting the sovereign authority of the United States, and that of their own; I feel an inexpressible satisfaction, that even this behaviour cannot stain the fame of the American soldiery. It cannot be imputable to, or reflect dishonour on, the army at large; but, on the contrary, it will, by the striking contrast it exhibits, hold up to public view the troops in the most advantageous point of light. Upon taking all the circumstances into consideration, I cannot sufficiently express my surprise and indignation at the arrogance, the folly, and the wickedness, of the mutineers; nor can I sufficiently admire the fidelity, the bravery, and patriotism, which must for ever signalize the unsullied character of the other corps of our army. For when we consider that these Pennsylvania levies, who have now mutinied, are recruits, and soldiers of a day, who have not borne the heat and burden of the war, and who can have in reality very few hardships to complain of; and when we, at the same time,

time, recollect that those soldiers, who have lately been furloughed from this army, are the veterans who have patiently endured hunger, nakedness, and cold, who have suffered and bled without a murmur, and who, with perfect good order, have retired to their homes, without a settlement of their accounts, or a farthing of money in their pockets; we shall be as much astonished at the virtues of the latter as we are struck with horror and detestation at the proceedings of the former: and every candid mind, without indulging ill-grounded prejudices, will undoubtedly make the proper discrimination."

Before the detachment from the army could reach Philadelphia, the disturbances were in a great degree quieted without bloodshed; but Major-general Howe was ordered by Congress to continue his march into Pennsylvania, "in order that immediate measures might be taken to confine and bring to trial all such persons belonging to the army as have been principally active in the late mutiny, to disarm the remainder, and to examine fully into all the circumstances relating thereto."

The interval between the treaty with Great Britain, and his retiring into private life, was devoted by the commander in chief to objects of permanent utility. The independance of his country being established, he looked forward with anxiety to its future destinies. These might greatly depend on the systems to be adopted on the re-

turn of peace; and to those systems much of his attention was directed. Among the various interesting subjects which at this period claimed the consideration of Congress, was the future peace-establishment of the United States. As the experience of General Washington would certainly enable him to suggest many useful ideas on this important point, his opinions respecting it were requested by the committee to whom it was referred. His letter on this occasion, which, it is presumed, was deposited in the archives of state, will long deserve the attention of those to whom the interests of the United States may be confided. On a well regulated and disciplined militia during peace, his strongest hopes of securing the future tranquillity, dignity, and respectability of his country were placed; and his sentiments on this subject are entitled to the more regard, as a long course of severe experience had enabled him to mark the total incompetency of the existing system to the great purposes of national defence.

At length, on the 25th of November, the British troops evacuated New York, and a detachment from the American army took possession of that town. The guards being posted for the security of the citizens, General Washington, accompanied by Governor Clinton, and attended by many civil and military officers, and a large number of respectable inhabitants on horseback, made his public entry into the city, where he was received

ceived with every mark of respect and attention. His military course was now on the point of terminating; and, previous to divesting himself of the supreme command, he was about to bid adieu to his comrades in arms.

This affecting interview took place on the 4th of December.

At noon, the principal officers of the army assembled at Frances' tavern; soon after which, their beloved commander entered the room. His emotions were too strong to be concealed. Filling a glass, he turned to them, and said, "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you: I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy, as your former ones have been glorious and honourable." Having drunk, he added: "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged to you, if each of you will come and take me by the hand." General Knox, being nearest, turned to him. Incapable of utterance, Washington grasped his hand, and embraced him. In the same affectionate manner he took leave of each succeeding officer. In every eye was the tear of dignified sensibility, and not a word was articulated to interrupt the majestic silence, and the tenderness of the scene. Leaving the room, he passed through the corps of light infantry, and walked to Whitehall, where a barge waited to convey him to Powles-hook. The whole company followed in mute and solemn procession,

procession, with dejected countenances, testifying feelings of delicious melancholy, which no language can describe. Having entered the barge, he turned to the company, and, waving his hat, bade them a silent adieu.

They paid him the same affectionate compliment, and after the barge had left them, returned in the same solemn manner to the place where they had assembled.

Congress was then in session at Annapolis in Maryland, to which place General Washington repaired, for the purpose of resigning into their hands the authority with which they had invested him.* He arrived on the 19th of December. The next day, he informed that body of his intention to ask leave to resign the commission he had the honour of holding in their service, and re-

* On his way he stopped a few days at Philadelphia, for the purpose of settling his accounts with the comptroller. The following account of this part of his duty is extracted from Mr. Gordon. "While in the city, he delivered in his accounts to the comptroller down to December the 13th, all in his own hand-writing, and every entry made in the most particular manner, stating the occasion of each charge, so as to give the least trouble in examining and comparing them with the vouchers with which they were attended.

"The heads are as follows, copied from the folio manuscript paper book, in the file of the treasury-office, No. 3700; being a black box of tin, containing, under lock and key, both that and the vouchers.

'Total of expenditures from 1775 to 1783, exclusive of provisions from commissaries and contractors,

quested to know whether it would be their pleasure that he should offer his resignation in writing, or at an audience.

To give the more dignity to the act, they determined that it should be offered at a public audience on the following Tuesday at twelve o'clock.*

	£.	s.	d.
contractors, and of liquors, &c. from them and others	3387	14	4
Secret intelligence and service	1982	10	0
Spent in reconnoitring and travelling	1874	8	8
Miscellaneous charges	2952	10	1
Expended besides, dollars according to the scale of depreciation	6114	14	0
	16311	17	1

'Two hundred guineas advanced to General M'Dougall are not included in the 1982*l.* 10*s.* not being yet settled, but included in some of the other charges, and so reckoned in the general sum.

'Note, 104,364 of the dollars were received after March 1780, and although credited at forty for one, many did not fetch at the rate of a hundred for one; which 27,775 of them are returned without deducting any thing from the above account, and therefore actually made a present of to the public.

'General Washington's account from June	£.	s.	d.
1775 to the end of June 1783	16,311	17	1
Expenditure from July 1st, 1783, to December 13th	1717	5	4
Added afterwards from that date to December	213	8	4
Mrs. Washington's travelling expences in coming to the General and returning	1064	1	0
	19,306	11	9
'Lawful money of Virginia, the same as the Massachussetts, or	14,479	18	9¼

* The 23d of December.

When the hour arrived for performing a ceremony so well calculated to recall to the mind the various interesting scenes which had passed since the commission now to be returned was granted, the gallery was crowded with spectators; and many respectable persons, among whom were the legislative and executive characters of the state, several general officers, and the consul-general of France, were admitted on the floor of Congress.

The representatives of the sovereignty of the union remained seated and covered. The spectators were standing and uncovered. The General was introduced by the secretary, and conducted to a chair. After a decent interval, silence was commanded, and a short pause ensued. The president* then informed him, that "the United States in Congress assembled were prepared to receive his communications." With a native dig-

"The general entered in his book, 'I find upon the final adjustment of these accounts, that I am a considerable loser, my disbursements falling a good deal short of my receipts, and the money I had upon hand of my own; for besides the sums I carried with me to Cambridge in 1775, I received monies afterwards on private account in 1777 and since, which, except small sums that I had occasion now and then to apply to private uses, were all expended in the public service. Through hurry, I suppose, and the perplexity of business (for I know not how else to account for the deficiency) I have omitted to charge the same, whilst every debt against me is here credited.

July 1st, 1783."

* General Mifflin.

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nity improved by the solemnity of the occasion, the General rose, and delivered the following address.

"MR. PRESIDENT,

"The great events on which my resignation depended, having at length taken place, I have now the honour of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself to them, to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country.

"Happy in the confirmation of our independance and sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States, of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the union, and the patronage of Heaven. The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations; and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my countrymen, increases with every review of the momentous contest.

"While I repeat my obligations to the army in general, I should do injustice to my own feelings not to acknowledge in this place, the peculiar services and distinguished merits of the gentlemen who have been attached to my person during the war. It was impossible the choice of confidential officers to compose my family should have been more fortunate. Permit me, Sir, to recommend in particular, those who have continued in the service to the present moment, as worthy of the favourable notice and patronage of Congress.

"I consider it as an indispensable duty, to close this last act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendance of them to his holy keeping.

"Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

After advancing to the chair, and delivering his commission to the president, he returned to his place, and received, standing, the following answer of Congress, which was delivered by the president.

"SIR,

"The United States in Congress assembled, receive with emotions too affecting for utterance, the solemn resignation of the authorities under which you have led their troops with success through a perilous and a doubtful war. Called upon by your country to defend its invaded rights, you accepted the sacred charge, before it had formed alliances, and whilst it was without funds or a government to support you. You have conducted the great military contest with wisdom and fortitude, invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes. You have, by the love and confidence of your fellow citizens, enabled them to display their martial genius, and transmit their fame to posterity. You have persevered, till these United States, aided by a magnanimous king and nation, have been enabled, under a just Providence, to close the war in freedom, safety, and independance; on which happy event, we sincerely join you in congratulations.

"Having

"Having defended the standard of liberty in this new world; having taught a lesson useful to those who inflict, and those who feel oppression, you retire from the great theatre of action with the blessings of your fellow citizens: but the glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command; it will continue to animate remotest ages.

"We feel with you our obligations to the army in general, and will particularly charge ourselves with the interests of those confidential officers, who have attended your person to this affecting moment.

"We join you in commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, beseeching him to dispose the hearts and minds of its citizens, to improve the opportunity afforded them of becoming a happy and respectable nation. And for you, we address to him our earnest prayers, that a life so beloved, may be fostered with all his care; that your days may be happy as they have been illustrious; and that he will finally give you that reward which this world cannot give."

This scene being closed, a scene rendered peculiarly interesting by the personages who appeared in it, by the great events it recalled to the memory, and by the singularity of the circumstances under which it was displayed; the American chief withdrew from the hall of Congress, leaving the silent and admiring spectators deeply impressed with those sentiments which its solemnity and dignity were well calculated to inspire. Having laid down his military character, General Washington retired to Mount Vernon, to which place he was followed by

by the enthusiastic love, esteem, and admiration of his countrymen. Relieved from the agitations of a doubtful contest, and from the toils of an exalted station, he returned with increased delight to the duties and the enjoyments of a private citizen.

In the shade of retirement, under the protection of a free government, and the benignant influence of mild and equal laws, he indulged the hope of tasting that felicity which is the reward of a mind at peace with itself, and conscious of its own purity.

END OF VOL. IV.

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